UNIVERSITY OF PENNSYLVANIA

KATE CHOPIN AND HER CREOLE STORIES

DANIEL S. RANKIN

A THESIS
IN ENGLISH
PRESENTED TO THE FACULTY OF THE GRADUATE SCHOOL IN
PARTIAL FULFILLMENT OF THE REQUIREMENTS FOR
THE DEGREE OF DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

PHILADELPHIA
1932

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To the Memory of My Father
Who Loved the Literature of America
and Taught Me to Esteem
the Writers of the South

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NOTE

QUITE certainly the idea of writing a life of Kate Chopin never would have occurred to me had not Dr. Frank A. Laurie of the University of Pennsylvania mentioned the lack of a biography.

I am aware of the disconcerting impossibility of expressing in an adequate manner the gratitude I feel toward those whose kindness and courtesy turned the experience of gathering material into a pleasure. To Kate Chopin's daughter, Mrs. Lelia Hattersley of New York, who placed at my disposal her mother's manuscripts and journals, I owe a great debt. Dr. and Mrs. George Chopin of St. Louis favored me with a wealth of anecdote and generous hospitality. Mr. Felix Chopin of St. Louis put me in touch with important sources of information and helped me with his discriminating criticism. Kate Chopin's relatives in Louisiana, in particular Mrs. Fanny Chopin of Derry, Miss Marie Brazeale and Mr. Phanor Brazeale of Natchitoches replied amiably to much questioning.

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The patience and consideration of Mr. Phelps Soule and members of the staff of the University of Pennsylvania Press deserve my full thanks. With characteristically kind assistance Rev. Joseph A. McDonald of Philadelphia demonstrated his interest in my efforts. I owe a grateful acknowledgement of genuine appreciation to Miss Marie Louise von Göldberg of

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D. S. R.

St. Mary's Manor
Langhorne, Pa.
July 13, 1932

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Part I

KATE CHOPIN

INTRODUCTION

THE LAST two decades of the nineteenth century brought to American literature, in the novel and the short story, studies of Louisiana Creole and Acadian life which seem to rank with the best " regional " fiction of this country. To the reading public George Washington Cable in 1879 revealed a new and most attractive conception of the romantic in literature with *Old Creole Days.* These dramatic and moving stories were vastly more than a literary sensation, for their author combined humor and delicate sentiment with genuine artistic excellence. Nicely regulated by his skilful care, his art was fused by exquisite touches into the flame of inspiration. In 1880 Cable published *The Grandissimes* and followed this vivid and highly colored novel of life in Louisiana, in 1884, with his incisive social analysis of *The Creoles of Louisiana.* Unfortunately Cable later became fervently sociological.

To the Creoles of his day Cable's work was not acceptable; in some cases it actually caused offense. The opinion still prevails in Louisiana that Cable's esthetic pleasure in the rich spectacle of Creole life, past and present, was not backed by a remorseless instinct for telling the truth.

Partly impelled by the desire to correct Cable's fictional representations Grace King began to write short stories that put the human nature of the Creole under a more accurate scrutiny. From her searching and exact interest in motives and conduct, in manners and tradition Grace King wrote *Monsieur Motte* (1888), *Tales of a Time and Place* (1892), and *Balcony Stories* (1893).

Ruth McEnery Stuart is another factor in the Creole literature of Louisiana. Her two earliest collections of short stories, *A Golden Wedding and Other Stories* (1893) and *Carlotta's Intended and Other Stories* (1894), when they treat the Creole portray the less wealthy and socially prominent among them, descendants of the French and Spanish of New Orleans who live simple lives of humble labor. Plot and setting are, in her work, subordinated to characterization. Ruth McEnery Stuart pursued something unique in the field of American art, a field that, before she discerned it, was going to waste—the poor and the lowly in the old southern social order. Whether highly amusing or finely pathetic her characterizations are invariably true to the life she depicts.

Molly Moore Davis (Mary Evelyn Moore Davis), who delighted in pictorial effects to tell her stories of Creole society in New Orleans, wrote her more important contributions to the Creole literature of Louisiana after 1900, principally *The Little Chevalier* (1905) and *The Price of Silence* (1907), but in *An Elephant's Track and Other Stories* (1897) with *The Queen's Garden* (1900) she began to reproduce with rare fidelity a long series of affectionate studies, minute and painstaking, of Creole life, manners, and character.

From these writers Kate Chopin was apart and independent. She read the stories Cable collected in *Old Creole Days* as they appeared in *Scribner's*. Afterwards she read them again, and, from the testimony of her son Felix, " she read Cable with interest and regretted that his artistic ability was superior to his sense of justice. My mother did not believe he was true to the Creole life he wrote about."[1] Her appreciation of Ruth McEnery Stuart is reprinted in Chapter Ten of Part I. She never expressed an opinion of Molly Moore Davis, although she read her early works with a half-humorous curiosity.

Though she believed Cable's stories gave false impressions Kate Chopin never wrote anything deliberately to correct his work. Her short stories have added to the stock of our literature's artistic riches, by their quality of vision and insight; they are sharply unique, with a particular subtlety all their own. Her fiction is more than an evocation of Creole and Acadian life.

Like *Rodman the Keeper: Southern Sketches* (1880) of Constance Fenimore Woolson, *In the Tennessee Mountains*

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[1] Letter of August 18, 1931.

(1884) of Charles Egbert Craddock, *A White Heron and Other Stories* (1886) of Sarah Orne Jewett, *Free Joe and Other Sketches* (1887) of Joel Chandler Harris, *In Ole Virginia* (1887) of Thomas Nelson Page, *A New England Nun and Other Stories* (1891) of Mary Wilkins Freeman, *Main-Travelled Roads* (1891) of Hamlin Garland, *Flute and Violin* (1891) of James Lane Allen, *Meadow Grass* (1895) of Alice Brown, *Old Chester Tales* (1896) of Margaret Deland, *Mackinac and Lake Stories* (1899) of Mary Hartwell Catherwood—Kate Chopin's *Bayou Folk* (1894) and *A Night in Acadie* (1897) describe not merely a special locality or a unique region, a forgotten village here and there, a segment of humanity off the beaten track, but also the spiritual forces which have created the humanity described and portrayed—faith and deeply rooted constancy, habits that accrue with passing generations, and custom that is as natural as life itself. With the exquisite restraint, gracious clarity of vision, and artistic force diffused throughout her work Kate Chopin's art attains the rank which is denied to even highly talented writers—the art of genius.

Her contribution to American letters should not be ignored. To consider that Kate Chopin may be forgotten is more remarkable than pleasing.

Chapter I

AN AMBITIOUS LITTLE METROPOLIS
ST. LOUIS, 1851

THE STATE of society in Eastern Missouri during the mid-decades of the nineteenth century was, in every sense, curious and interesting. It was not a frontier nor a provincial nor an aristocratic society. Its elements were composite of characteristics that made it unique among American States in the middle years of that era.

Into that society Katherine O'Flaherty was born in the city of St. Louis, February 8th, 1851.

At that time St. Louis was in the refreshing newness of its beginnings as an important American City, with peculiarities all its own of surviving frontier, of an expanding provincialism, and of a fast-fading foreign aristocracy. It was a young city, exhibiting the spirit, the bliss, and the sensitiveness of democratic enthusiasm. It proudly boasted that it was a city of opportunity. That, indeed, it was. As the travel books, city directories, and gazetteers of the period declared, and as the business success of Katherine O'Flaherty's father demonstrated, in every sense of that fine old phrase, St. Louis became and remained "an emporium of commerce."[1]

Truth resounds in the vigorous eloquence and resonant phrases of an enthusiastic editor's assertion that:

> In casting the eye over the map of the United States and Territories, it must forcibly strike the observer, that the central position of St. Louis gives this city a peculiar advantage; and it is known, that, when navigation is open, steam vessels are arriving from and departing daily, to all the cardinal points of the compass. The

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[1] Not all the travelers who visited the West in its early days were "prying scribblers." E. S. Wortley's *Travels in the United States, 1849–1850,* London, 1851, carefully discusses the advantages and merits of St. Louis.

> revolutions of government and in commerce have built up and destroyed cities; the vicissitudes of fortune have depopulated towns and countries; but nothing except the great convulsions of Nature—earthquakes and hurricane, pestilence and the sword—can arrest the advancement of St. Louis to that enviable consideration, which will class this city among the great *emporiums of commerce* which fill and adorn the pages of the annalist.
>
> If vegetation should fail, if sunshine and rain should withhold their accustomed offices, and no longer fertilize the earth; if our mighty rivers—the extent and magnitude of which are deemed fabulous by millions who have not beheld them—should cease to flow, then will St. Louis be arrested in her onward march to greatness—but not 'till then.[2]

Ludicrous? No! Such writing comes from the days before the fear of eloquence!

The mid-years of the century became the golden age of the steamboat traffic, foreseen in the previous decade. The commerce of the city flourished and its trade territory widened to an amazing extent. The river front was one of the most famous American scenes of the time. The long St. Louis levee was lined with steamboats receiving and discharging cargoes. The commission houses became great and wealthy. Katherine O'Flaherty's father prospered as a commission merchant, and shared the wealth.

One lament of regret appeared in the early journalistic assurances of the city's promise. No space had been left between the town and the river " for the sake of health and the pleasure of the promenade." Business had encroached on the very margin of the noble stream. How different would have been its appearance if space for an elegant promenade had been left! " Its bosom, as it were, opened to the breezes of the river, the stream gladdened by the enlivening scene of business and pleasure." Instead, the city extended in a disjoined and scattered manner along the river.[3]

The frontier in the fifties had moved westward from the

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[2] In Charles Keemble's *Introduction* to the *St. Louis Directory* for 1838–1839.

[3] See the *St. Louis Directory* for 1842.

Mississippi without removing all the vestiges of its previous existence from St. Louis. Some of the primitive brutality of the frontier remained in the tall tales and occasional outbursts among the surviving keel-boatmen and bargemen who haunted the levee and lived their days in a spirit of rude zest. The playful and destructive rowdyism of the earlier volunteer fire department had attracted an element that was slowly disappearing. On the western outskirts of the city the coarse democracy of the squatters in their frontier costumes reminded the inhabitants of the courageous pioneers. Among the less affluent remnant of the original population there was no inconsiderable sprinkling of Indian blood. In the capacity of servants or as the unfortunate wives of degenerate boatmen the metiffs, offspring of the octoroons, dwelt apart unnoticed or shunned even by the slaves. All these crumpled remnants of pioneer days were objects of dismay to the self-conscious importance of the city's prosperous inhabitants in the fifties.

Hesitant assurances of order, authority, and tradition peep through the pages of the records of this time. Evidences, not to be misunderstood now, though they are diverting, of early American provincialism were apparent in this period of St. Louis society. The city was developing a social consciousness, boastfully aware of being a center, with the vague hope of a metropolitan destiny. St. Louis of the eighteen-fifties makes a strong appeal to the modern imagination.

There was an eager, an almost undue pride in the external details accessory to the city's progress; in the "Independent Police" established in 1846 for the "aid and protection of the citizens." Loud journalistic compliments to the meager beginnings of the too-long-delayed project followed this organization through the four years of its "Independent" energetic activity. When it became the "Official City Police Department" emphatic statements from Mayor Kennett's office in 1852 assured the citizens that the "police force was organized and active." It needed to be.[4]

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[4] J. Thomas Scharf, *History of St. Louis City and County*, 2 vols., Philadelphia, 1883. See Chapter 18: "Municipal Government."

Many adventurers had come to St. Louis and found themselves in a position to claim a standing in society which they had not been accustomed to possess. The occasions, in consequence, for broils for supposed neglect, contempt, or questioning of character were numerous. Fatal "affairs of honor" were a bloody stain upon the character of the city. In 1847 public gas lamps aided the police force in its nocturnal activities for the enforcement of law and order.[5] One may readily imagine what the night streets had been before. In an amusingly ambitious announcement from the city authorities it was, in 1854, recommended that the police "wear uniforms or badges that would be better adapted for designating their office than the star now worn."[4] Needless to say the recommendation was adopted. One may wonder about the improvements that followed, and imagine that Katherine O'Flaherty's father felt more secure with the realization that the police, clad in the new uniforms with the new badges, could more authoritatively protect his boat store and his wholesale grocery and commission establishment, as they sauntered along the levee to detect marauders and enforce the law.

St. Louis citizens were not stirred with enthusiasm by Parkman's account of his visit to the city in 1846. His meager paragraph of reference to the city in *The Oregon Trail* gave evidence of the bustle and business there. It did not notice and record civic improvements. Visitors to St. Louis in 1846 were urged in the press and in pamphlets to visit the "wonder engine" of the reservoir and water works. The mysteries of machinery had exacted admiration to the extent that this "engine" was regarded and placarded as a mighty achievement. Parkman did not mention it.[6] He wrote quite summarily:

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[5] See *The Sixth Annual Report of the St. Louis Gas Light Co.,* St. Louis, 1853. A complete statement of the progress of the St. Louis Gas Works from the beginnings in 1847 to 1853. All the details are there; all are of interest.

[6] A tradition I have not been able to substantiate declares that Francis Parkman and his friend, Quincy Adams Shaw, those two young friends fresh

> Last spring, 1846, was a busy season in the city of St. Louis. The hotels were crowded, and the gunsmiths and saddlers were kept constantly at work providing arms and equipment for the different parties of travellers. Steamboats were leaving the levee and passing up the Missouri crowded with passengers on their way to the frontier.

This was all he had to say. The activity, bustle, and movement mentioned by Parkman can be attributed to the interest in the newer western frontier, to the excitement engendered by the Mexican War, and to the fact that no railroad had yet reached the city. But the citizens reading *The Oregon Trail* were not satisfied. Parkman had failed to do justice from their point of view to the more valid details of the civic spirit of St. Louis.[7]

At the time Katherine O'Flaherty was born the descendants of the early French and Spanish families lived part of their existence in a spirit of high-chokered formalities. The old French residence district, gone today, symbolized how tenuously many clung to subdued propriety. Dignified gentlemen took infinite pains in trimming their beards, cultivated a rather melancholy frame of mind, dressed in frock coats, and wore high hats straight on their heads. Their external conduct attempted to epitomize perfect behavior. Their bows to ladies were of the sweeping kind. They indulged in Spanish snuff, genteelly. It helped to maintain a slightly foreign air. They carried gold-knobbed canes, and met unseemly overtures of strangers with lifted eyebrows and hearty disdain. Such a stream of immigrants was continually pouring in, the inhabitants learned the habit of distrust. Hospitality to strangers was not a characteristic of these older families.

On pleasant days patrician ladies, frail and aloof, departed in closed carriages, horse drawn, for the length of Carondelet Avenue, or along Park Avenue beyond the city boundary to

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from Harvard College who had decided to set out from the Missouri to the foothills of the Rockies, procured supplies and equipment in St. Louis from Thomas O'Flaherty and Robert McAllister.

[7] Scharf, *op. cit.*, p. 741. Read his 23d chapter: "The Press."

the Public Park. They wore oddly rich bonnets and long black half-mits.

Their spacious, imposing homes were usually set upon a terrace. High green vines clung to side walls of humble, dark brick, while the unblushing and unashamed façade of each residence turned a veneer of marble to the street. Wide verandas and decorative doors led into interiors, displaying the charm of decorations imported from France. Mirrors were set in gilded garlands. Clocks, surmounted by gilded hunting scenes, delicately chimed the hours and half hours. Gilded furniture reflected the French mode of a slightly earlier date. Tapestries with the figures of Boucher's pastoral aristocracy posturing in formal garden settings, and crystal chandeliers, fringed and festooned with red glass, were proud family possessions. Pianos were a rarity. Only a few of the very wealthy Creole families had them.

The magic fluency of Mozart as well as the dreamy delicacy of Chopin appealed to Katherine O'Flaherty's mother, and to the daughter, who inherited the mother's rare musical talent.

The early French settlers had bequeathed to their descendants a taste for gardening. Across the sides of the houses Virginia creeper and the trumpet vine climbed to the roof and mottled in autumn the darker green of the growing ivy with crimson patches. Flowered terraces and extensive gardens were not enclosed, as in Philadelphia, by high brick walls. Fragrant in spring with lilac and honeysuckle, brilliant with fleur-de-lys and old-fashioned roses that heightened the beauty of the native red bud, gay in summer with tiger lilies, vari-colored phlox, and the fair verbena, these ever noticeable "handsome gardens" of old St. Louis surrounded the dwellings of the residential section of the city in the eighteen-fifties with the gorgeous blazonry of flowers in gay profusion.

Katherine O'Flaherty's home on Eighth Street, between Gratiot and Chouteau Streets, had its "handsome garden" where, in the quiet days of her childhood, nature, through the secret spell of mist and rain and sun, awoke for the eyes of the inquisitive girl the mystic sight of beauty growing in a garden. Trees cast mysterious shadows over cool ferny nooks, beyond the daffodil beds and the rows of moccasin flowers.

Commerce has laid its stone and cement foundations where Katherine O'Flaherty first became aware of the beauty and mystery of nature. Great skyscrapers and solid business warehouses have sprung up where formerly Madame Rosalie Saugrain's roses and lilies bloomed that inspired Henry Shaw to plan and bequeath to the city of St. Louis his world-renowned Gardens.

In the decade before the Civil War Katherine O'Flaherty's life was surrounded by remnants of a past time and touched by the various new social forces of her generation. Her heritage united her on her mother's side to the quiet, confident, self-possessed aristocracy. On her father's side to a spirit of vigorous enterprise and commerce. Her mother's family was socially secure and eminent in lineage. It represented certain strands of the old-world society that were in losing conflict with new economic conditions of mid-western democracy. Her father had achieved commercial success and social acceptance. His business interests and his constant charity toward the less fortunate members of the city's varied life gave his family, at least, occasions not to forget the existence of poverty and misery.

Many nationalities were contributing in the subtle way of race during the eighteen-fifties to the culture of the city. Celtic buoyancy and Germanic sturdiness were mingling with the original French and Spanish natures. The German inroad gradually became the most strenuous and remained the sturdiest. Only very much later, however, did St. Louis give evidence of becoming " an island of Germanic culture in a sea of American indifference." [8]

Over the whole city there was a strong southern influence that softened the grim commercialism of the Teuton by retaining the Creole character of gaiety and absorbing the cheerfulness of the Celt. Officially Missouri and St. Louis were

[8] Manley O. Hudson, the chapter on *Missouri,* in *These United States,* ed. by Ernest Greuning, 2 vols., New York, 1924. II, 297.

not Southern. Politically both were Northern during the Civil War. Sentimentally both were, and are, almost as Southern as New Orleans. The explanation is obvious. St. Louis was established as a trading post by an expedition of French and French Creoles organized in New Orleans to promote the exploration and settlement of the vast unknown regions stretching northward and traversed by the Mississippi. The city was founded in the month of February, 1764, by an expedition headed by Pierre Laclède Ligueste and the younger Auguste Chouteau.

Katherine O'Flaherty's imagination as a child was stirred by the repeated account of the brave deeds of the city's founders. Her maternal great-grandmother, Madame Victoria Verdon Charleville (1780–1865), a native of St. Louis, knew the intimate details of the lives of the men and women who courageously accomplished the settlement of the trading post. It did not matter to her that the details she repeated might be legendary and in some instances totally untrue. The joy of this remarkable and vivacious old lady was to fire the mind of the child with enthralling stories of the characters and characteristics, often quite intimate, of the city's founders.

Madame Charleville's mother, Madame Victoria Verdon, had owned a line of keel boats that brought merchandise between New Orleans and St. Louis. Madame Charleville, when a young woman, had made the tedious voyage up and down the great river between the two cities. Every detail of danger and delay and difficulty remained vivid in her mind. She projected her own experience into the account of the venture of Laclède and his associates. Over and over again she loved to tell her great-granddaughter—the child with the questioning brown eyes and expressive face and inquisitive mind—that story of her own experience, with the account of Laclède's *superbe accomplissement.*

The child listened with astonished attention, alert and eager as the old lady's dulcet voice wove a magic picture for youth's imagination. She described La Salle, Hennepin, Marquette and others who had made some exploration of the country, although it was for most part invested with the romance of the unknown when Pierre Laclède, aristocrat, engineer, and city builder, set out with Auguste Chouteau and their followers to obtain more information about it. The voyage up the Mississippi in the rude boats of the day required nearly three months. (The mode of travel had not improved when Madame made her first trip.) Although the party left New Orleans early in August they did not arrive at Ste. Geneviève until late in October. Madame always told of the brief delay at this settlement before Laclède proceeded to Fort Chartres, and thence as far north as the juncture of the Missouri and Mississippi rivers. She insisted on the detail that the selection of the present site of St. Louis was made a permanent post only on the return.[9]

With characteristic Gallic enthusiasm she became excited when her narrative reached the point where Laclède scrambled up the steep lime cliffs at the foot of what is now Walnut Street, St. Louis, cut the bark of the four trees to mark his new home, and announced that he was going to form a settlement which might become one of the finest in America. Madame Charleville believed that prophecy had been fulfilled.

In later years the child who had listened with rapturous delight to these adventures turned only once to the material this great-grandmother had made ready for her. The one attempt to weave her art into historical material produced the interesting short story *The Maid of Saint Phillippe.* The nineties saw a new vogue of historical fiction, and *The Maid of Saint Phillippe* was Kate Chopin's contribution to the demand for historical romance.

When Fort Chartres was surrendered to the English in accordance with the provisions of the treaty of Paris, the garrison commanded by Louis St. Ange de Bellerive was transferred to St. Louis. The brief preface to *The Maid of Saint Phillippe* explains:

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[9] Auguste Chouteau, *Fragment of Col. Auguste Chouteau's Narrative of the Settlement of St. Louis.* A literal translation, St. Louis, 1858. This unique document is brief and should be read in its entirety.

An historical incident furnishes the ground work for this story. The tale describes the abandonment of Saint Phillippe in favor of the rival village of St. Louis and shows how the latter settlement started to become a great city.

The charming pictorial effects of the narrative and the atmosphere of a departed time are skillfully sustained. More important than the incidents is the character of Marianne—free, independent, impulsive, determined. It was the great-grandmother's influence that awoke a penetrating interest in character, particularly in independent, determined women. She admired courageous souls that dared and defied.

Kate Chopin's art did not harmonize with historical themes. The proposal to undertake a fictional account of the Spanish regime in that territory did not progress beyond the starting point. Aided by the recollection of the accounts repeated to her by her great-grandmother, who knew and loved the story of the Spanish rule in the town, as well as the French, Kate Chopin would have had little difficulty in turning into romance the history of the years when decided steps were taken by the Spanish Government to assert its control over the vast provinces of Upper and Lower Louisiana.

Katherine O'Flaherty had heard all of this from her great-grandmother's endless stock of historical fact and imagination. Her own work with the materials of historical fiction did not go further than *The Maid of Saint Phillippe.* The amazing fact is that when she did begin to write fiction, the rich material she had at hand from her earliest days she left untouched. Not that she should have used it. The important consideration is that she could have employed it and did not. From her heart she was to write the story of lives and characters of a state of society that aroused her talent and entered into her imagination more decisively than that of early Missouri. Sympathy, insight, and intimate understanding created her art, as if by magic, when life gave her the opportunity of knowing and loving the Bayou Folk of Louisiana.

Chapter II

A CELTIC FATHER AND A CREOLE MOTHER

KATHERINE'S father, Thomas O'Flaherty, was born in County Galway, Ireland, in the year 1805. He was a descendant of the historic O'Flahertys whose distinction in Elizabethan days had been a mention in many a pious prayer added to the invocations of the Litany:

> From the ferocious O'Flahertys,
> Good Lord, deliver us.

Educated in a distinctly religious atmosphere under the guidance of a parish priest who was fond of mathematics and French, Thomas O'Flaherty absorbed these studies while his mind was imbued with a strong religious faith. Sailing boats, tramping the countryside, and the varied activities of outdoor life were the diversions of his boyhood. He was a vigorous youth, gifted by nature with gallantry and calm self-possession.

Dissatisfied with his father's occupation in Ireland as a land agent, he decided to go to America. In 1823 he came to New York with small means, without undue family pride and all the futile snobberies it frequently fosters.

He lived in New York through the exciting period of the finishing of the Erie Canal, DeWitt Clinton's great ditch that provided a water level from the Great Lakes down the Hudson River to the Atlantic. A family tradition lingers to tell that in the frenzy of the celebration surging about the city he was in the booming parade that threaded through the streets in honor of the Governor. He heard the cascading cannonade sounding its thunderous obbligato to the turning of the Lake waters into the Canal. He shouted with the noisy paraders who witnessed the arrival of the *Seneca Chief* bearing the

Canal officials down the Hudson. When Governor DeWitt Clinton poured the keg of Lake water into the ocean of New York harbor to symbolize the union of the waterways, Thomas O'Flaherty watched with the silent throng that immediately cheered mightily.

Exciting days of 1825!

New York seems to have been disappointing. Interested in the possibilities of fortune and happiness, Thomas O'Flaherty decided to go to St. Louis. No doubt many of his acquaintances were enthusiastic about the ever-present allurement of this farther-away land. The West! The Frontier! He left New York with a group of young men, among whom were his brother Edmund O'Flaherty and his future partner in business ventures, Robert McAllister, who had landed in New York October 7, 1824, from Belfast on the ship *Louisa.*

Only through a family tradition is it possible to know that they went West over the southern route, not by way of the Erie Canal. From Philadelphia the southern route led over to the Susquehanna, at Harrisburg; thence up the valley of the lovely Juniata, winding for a hundred miles through scenes of romantic beauty that are partially preserved for modern eyes in a series of the Currier and Ives prints. Across the mountains was Pittsburgh. After the long journey over Forbes Road the comfort of following the waterway of the Ohio in the company of traders, who were ascending its tributaries into the heart of the New West, was particularly pleasant.

Cahokia, Illinois, at last—and across the wide Mississippi, St. Louis, then a village.

In 1825, and for many years to come, the giant Mississippi, turbulent and uncontrollable, formed an unbridged moat between St. Louis and the East. For many decades westbound traffic—and the railroads, too, when they first came—reached the city by the awkward time-destroying ferriage. When Thomas O'Flaherty crossed the ferry, this great public utility was controlled by Mr. Samuel Wiggins, a genial tavern owner, who humorously named a new steam-ferry *The Sea Serpent,* after the ice in the river during the winter of 1824 had crushed his first " elegant and substantial Ferry Boat."

Ferries of gradually increasing power and tonnage plied regularly and alternately from shore to shore until May 23, 1874. On that day—Thomas O'Flaherty's daughter, married to Oscar Chopin of New Orleans, was in St. Louis for the social festivities of the occasion—after seven years of patient skill and the united aid of many celebrated associates, the famous engineer, James B. Eads, amazed the world by opening for use his great bridge, novel in design and construction, that spanned the Mississippi. Trains from the East crossed the bridge into a tunnel under the steep water-front of the city, to emerge triumphantly in that busy mart of urban trade still known by the pastoral name of Mill Creek Valley. Today trains cross into the same tunnel, but the glory is gone. Smoke fills the tunnel, grass is growing up between the ancient stones of the steep levee, and the sidewalks that lead to the great old bridge the city once bragged about are cracked and dirty.

When Thomas O'Flaherty came to St. Louis there were Irish enough to welcome him with advice and the offer of opportunities. The modern reader who may be interested in the Irish in early St. Louis will find many delightful pages in the reminiscences—always complimentary—of Frederick L. Billon, who wrote from memory of the years 1817–1820. The italics are mine:

> Our Irish citizens of that day in St. Louis included in their number *a very liberal proportion of gentlemen of education and acquirements,* some of whom held important positions in our recently acquired territory. I witness James Rankin, our first, and Jeremiah Connor, our second sheriff.

An Irish Emigrant and Corresponding Society, with an initiation fee of five dollars, became active in St. Louis February 9, 1818. In October, 1819, a Hibernian or Erin Benevolent Society was formed. One of the first joys of its members was to make arrangements for celebrating the next St. Patrick's Day. Billon does not fail to record that occasion:

ST. PATRICK'S DAY

1820, March 17—The first observance of the day in St. Louis occurred on this day by a procession of the Society and a dinner, at which a number of toasts and sentiments were drank—the first one "The 17th of March." [1]

The Irish who came to St. Louis were energetic workers in its expansive frontier environment. Intense activity in commercial pursuits built up their family fortunes, rivaling those of the early Creole traders. Not all were successful. Among the oddities and curiosities in old local St. Louis names is that of "Kerry Patch." This land was commons without street lines. Shanties were sprinkled in a promiscuous fashion about the Patch, because all the occupants were squatters, some of whom unfortunately lived in the squalor of half-starved existence. Thomas O'Flaherty never failed to extend the helping hand of continuous charity to these less fortunate ones of his race. His daughter used the Patch as the background for the beginning of her longest short story, "A Vocation and a Voice."

With the Creole families, proud of their relationship to the founders of the city, he seems to have been on intimate social terms. His distinction, his gracious courtesy of manner, evident even in the daguerreotypes that remain and his portrait in oil by Manuel de França,[2] united with a sparkling wit and playful humor, warranted that social acceptance. His ability to speak their language with easy familiarity gained him admittance into the Creole families of St. Louis. His daughter inherited her keen mental alertness and discernment from him. Her writings and character studies all show these qualities.

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[1] Frederick Louis Billon, *Annals of St. Louis in its Territorial Days, from 1804 to 1821*, St. Louis, 1888, p. 68.

[2] For an interesting account of de França's Philadelphia sojourn see: John Sartain, *The Reminiscences of a Very Old Man, 1808–1897*, New York, 1899, p. 175; and Mantle Fielding, *Dictionary of American Painters, Sculptors and Engravers*, Philadelphia, n. d. (*ca.* 1925).

His St. Louis career may be found in J. Thomas Scharf, *History of St. Louis*, Philadelphia, 1883, II, 1625.

The first available records that make mention of Thomas O'Flaherty indicate how quickly he became established in a prominent civic interest. I found his name among " the well known citizens " who were members of the Union Fire Company No. 2, of St. Louis. This group of " Gentlemen Firemen " was formed in 1832. Some of its members were his lifelong intimate friends. Bryan Mullanphy, Fred L. Garesché, John and Edward Walsh—members of the Company—were prominent in the social, commercial, and financial development of St. Louis.

Union Fire Company No. 2 was a picturesque organization. The apparatus was painted a vivid vermilion. Modern apparatus bears the same flaming hue, though the modern fireman's uniform modestly lacks the gaudiness of the older ensemble. Members of Union Fire Company No. 2 wore blue shirts and white pantaloons when they rushed to fires. A red patent-leather belt, a red silk necktie and a blue, low-crowned, round top hat added more color to the attire. A large gold figure 2 was displayed on the blue shirt. " In Union There Is Strength " was the company's proud motto. In those days of elegance, Union Fire Company No. 2 possessed very elegant uniforms and accoutrements.[3]

A new interest was added to Thomas O'Flaherty's business and civic activities in 1839. He was at the time thirty-four years of age and had been more than ten years in Missouri. He married Miss Catherine de Reilhe, the daughter of a French Creole family of unassuming but genuine distinction. The de Reilhe family was related to the first American governor of the state of Missouri, and to the Saucier family, the founders of that charming place, Portage des Sioux, where Catherine de Reilhe lived.

The marriage record in the Parish Register of the Catholic Church of St. Francis Xavier at Portage des Sioux is very brief. Its omissions are unfortunate.

[3] Edward Edwards, *History of the Volunteer Fire Department of St. Louis.* [St. Louis?], 1906, pp. 134–145.

On November 25, 1839 were lawfully married before me the underwritten Mr. Thomas O'Flaherty, son of Mr. James O'Flaherty and Madame Bridget O'Flaherty, natives of Ireland, and Miss Catherine Reilhe, daughter of Antoine Reilhe and Madame Lucille Saucier of this Parish, St. Francis, alias Portage Des Sioux.

J. F. Van Assche, S. J.

Portage des Sioux, Mo., was at this time a settlement glamorous with interest. Few maps today will give its location, but if you look at an old map of Missouri you will notice a few miles above the juncture of the turbid Missouri with the clearer Mississippi a slender strip of land tapering to a point. Portage des Sioux, today a dreamy village, is there at the point on the West bank of the Mississippi. A *portage* is a stretch of land between two rivers over which the Indians and later travelers who imitated them carried canoes instead of going around the length of the point; it is a short cut to avoid delays or dangers. Such a portage gave the name to the village; "des Sioux" was added in memory of the Sioux who had used the portage and who met there at one of the greatest Indian gatherings to deed away their landed possessions for a pittance.

After Thomas O'Flaherty's marriage no record of his residence is available. Happiness was not to last long. Catherine de Reilhe died in giving birth to a son George, who was later the much-admired half brother of Katherine O'Flaherty.[4] A letter of George written from school to Katherine is a treasured possession of Kate Chopin's daughter.

St. Louis University
Sept 25, /55

Dear Sister

I write to you this little letter because I love you so much & do not know what to do to show it. I hope your own dear little self and your sweet little sister Jane are both very well your brother George is well and hopes that you & your sweet little brother are going to school & learning fast. You must tell your Ma I hope She and my pa are well & tell her to come & see me & bring me some more clothes. I am Glad to call

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[4] The records of St. Louis College show that "George O'Flaherty son of Capt. O'Flaherty" was enrolled as a pupil in the Academic Department, Sept., 1852.

Myself your Brother
George

University of St. Louis
Sept. 25th 1855

The first City Directory of St. Louis that lists Thomas O'Flaherty's name after the death of his first wife is that of 1842. It reads:

> O'Flaherty, Thos. (H. & Co.) boat store; res. Seventh b Franklin Ave. & Washington.

The boat business was lucrative at this time in St. Louis. Apparently Thomas O'Flaherty made particularly successful use of the business and social opportunities that presented themselves to him.

Although his business suffered from the effects of the great flood of 1844, there was no interference with his courtship of Eliza Faris, living at the time in her ancestral home, " The Charleville Place," far out from the city in St. Louis County.

On the crest of a hill between the Clayton and Manchester roads—reached by a private driveway which branches off the old Rock Road—stands a house which would not attract special notice now except as a cozy, trim-looking farmhouse—beautifully located, but beneath the fresh and modern exterior are the walls and framework of one of the very oldest houses in the country. In the early part of the eighteenth century a Frenchman named Chauvin embarked from Charleville, France, for Canada, bringing with him a colony of settlers to locate in the new country where he had large fur interests. Shortly after their arrival this Chauvin died and the colony scattered, many going to New Orleans and from there returning up the river to the Illinois settlements. Kaskaskia became the home of the Chauvin family. The head of the family, old

Joseph Chauvin de Charleville, died there in 1784, and most of his descendants adopted the name of Charleville from that time.

At the death of Joseph his widow, Madame François Brazeau de Charleville, came to St. Louis with her brother and five children; one of these children, Joseph, no doubt was the builder of the old house in the country. There is on record an old Spanish grant giving land in the northwest part of the county divided by the river DePeres, known as the Barrious tract, to Joseph Charleville. The old house occupies a part of this grant. The original house has been covered with siding without and boarded and papered within until there is nothing apparent to even the keenest observer which suggests the stout old building, as strongly built as a fort, which has crowned the hilltop for so many years. There is no doubt the house as first built was one of the typical French houses of the very earliest day of Missouri's history, with one great living room having a stone fireplace at either end and smaller rooms at the back. The logs which form part of the old house testify strongly to this idea, as they are placed in the old French fashion vertically, instead of lying horizontally, this later form of construction not coming in until after the advent of the Americans.

The house faces the east, and half imbedded in the earth, almost covered by the creeping grass, can still be traced the broad stones which once formed an open court in the front of the house, where no doubt the genial French family often gathered after the day's toil to discuss the problems of their day. Unusual quantities of Indian flints and broken pottery have been turned up by the plow about the place which tell of even earlier dwellers on the hilltop than the Charlevilles, but the stories are all lost in that twilight land of the past. No echoes come back from the old house to tell of what has been; and the mists of oblivion rising thickly have formed an impenetrable veil between those days and ours. Even as the canoe of the Indian may once have passed softly over the silent waters of the little DePeres, which winds around the foot of the hill, and have glided with it into the shadows of the forest beyond—so the Chauvins and Charlevilles and all of the people of the long ago have vanished, leaving behind them scarcely a memory. But their old house still stands. From that old home in 1844 came a young girl, Eliza Faris, a descendant of Jacques Chauvin de Charleville, into the city for her marriage.

The members of the congregation of the parish of St. Francis Xavier in St. Louis who listened to the announcements of the banns of marriage during July, 1844, heard the name of Thomas O'Flaherty proclaimed with that of Eliza Faris. Churchgoers who were surprised found excuses for their amazement in the difference in age between the future bride and groom.

The Creoles were not surprised that Thomas O'Flaherty was thirty-nine and Eliza Faris not yet sixteen. The Creoles knew that Eliza Faris' mother, married at fifteen to William Faris, was Marie Athenaise Charleville of St. Louis, whose mother, again being only sixteen when married, was the youngest daughter of Joseph Verdon of Point Coupé, La., who had married Victoire Richelet. She, too, was quite a child when married, and her mother was barely fifteen when led to the altar. Early marriages were usual among the Creoles.

The marriage record in the Church archives is given in full because the family record gives 1846 as the date.

August 1, 1844.

The requisite publications having been made I have united in the holy bonds of matrimony according to the rites of the Catholic Church, Mr. Thomas O'Flaherty, son of James and Bridget O'Flaherty, and Miss Eliza Faris, daughter of Wm. Faris and Mary Athenaise Charleville.

In presence of

James Morgan
Mary Bompart Witnesses.

J. L. Gleizal, S. J.[5]

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[5] In the Records of the Marriage Bureau in the City Hall, St. Louis, is this entry, Book III, page 101:

> Married. On the first day of August, 1844, Mr. Thomas O'Flaherty [son of James and Bridget O'Flaherty] and Miss

Thomas O'Flaherty found a number of odd and interesting personalities among the many relatives of his young wife. His home in the city became a welcome shelter to the numerous retinue of relatives who, in the Creole way—a gracious way it is—never let you forget them, and never allow you to imagine they have failed to remember you.

Eliza Faris's father was a descendant of William Faris who landed at Norfolk, Virginia, in 1760 with the Zane Family. They were all French Huguenots.[6] Her mother, Marie Athenaise Charleville Faris, born in St. Louis in 1809 and married in 1825, was a descendant of that ardently patriotic Jacques Chauvin of Charleville, France, who added the title of his birthplace to his own family name.[7] Of all the relatives the most delightful and the most important, because of her future influence over Thomas O'Flaherty's daughter Katherine, was Madame Victoria Verdon Charleville. Born in St. Louis in 1780, she married Joseph B. Charleville of Kaskaskia, Illinois, July 5, 1797. In 1844 this elderly couple, living in Kaskaskia, made frequent visits across the river to St. Louis, and occasionally returned to New Orleans.

Madame Victoria Verdon Charleville, Eliza Faris O'Flaherty's maternal grandmother, had an ardent affection for Thomas O'Flaherty. The very sound of the name O'Flaherty —and her never successful pronunciation of it—always amused her. This meeting with an O'Flaherty had been an occasion of joyous interest, because the name had been in her memory for years in consequence of an incident in the romantic life of Father Pierre Huet de la Valinière, the great wanderer and

> Eliza Faris daughter of Wm. Faris and Mary Athenaise Charleville. In the presence of James Morgan and Mary Bompart.
>
> J. L. Gleizal, S. J.
>
> Filed and recorded 17th Sept. 1844.
>
> S. D. Barlow, Recorder.

[6] From Norfolk they went to Colepepper, Va. In 1774 some of the members of the Faris family accompanied Ebenezer Zane to Fort Henry, which was established in that year and is now Wheeling, W. Va. The Faris family in the United States is from this original French Huguenot stock. (Letter of Edgar C. Faris, of Kansas City, Mo., May 4, 1931.)

[7] Paul E. Beckwith, *The Creoles of St. Louis,* St. Louis, 1893, p. 141.

the turbulent disturber, who had rescued in 1758 a little girl and her mother from a band of Indians near Montreal when he was teaching at the Seminary in that city. The name of the rescued mother and daughter was O'Flaherty.[8]

Father Valinière told this incident in his life to acquaintances in Louisiana while he was there in 1789. He knew the Verdon family. Little Victoria, just nine years old and on her first visit to Louisiana, heard him describe the rescue. She never forgot the story nor the name of the rescued girl. In later years she gave Thomas O'Flaherty evidences of sincere admiration; she watched his success with encouraging interest and loved his children, especially the daughter Katherine, as her own.

Thomas O'Flaherty was as deeply rooted in the city he had selected as his home as if he had had two or three generations of ancestors there. His position in its life gave him a sweeping view of the field of activity of a feverishly growing, nervous, ever-expanding young city. And in that animated scene he never ceased through a quarter of a century to take the liveliest interest. His success in business gave him time for leisure, and for civic and charitable activities.

In 1846, when war with Mexico was certain, St. Louis did not lag in patriotic display. Thomas O'Flaherty's business felt the boom of hearty purchasing in preparation for going on a picturesque journey to war, and for his patriotic services he was elected an honorary member of the Washington Guards, with the rank of Captain. Friends and associates took pains to gratify his fondness for the title.[9]

Captain O'Flaherty aided Henry O'Reilly in his struggle to bring to St. Louis the benefits of the newly-invented "magnetic telegraph."[10]

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[8] For this and other details of Father Valinière's career see Martin I. J. Griffin's *American Catholic Historical Researches,* Philadelphia, 1906, XXIII, 203–239.

[9] For an account of the *Washington Guards* see: John Hogan, *Thoughts About St. Louis,* St. Louis, 1854, p. 35.

[10] Scharf, *op. cit.,* II, 1425.

In 1848 a son was born to Eliza Faris and Thomas O'Flaherty, who was given the name Thomas in baptism. Little is known of him. He grew to manhood and when about twenty years old was killed in an accident. A runaway horse dashed his buggy against the iron supports of a bridge. The unconscious boy fell into the river and was drowned. A daughter Jane lived only a few years.

After the cholera epidemic of 1849 Capt. O'Flaherty became an intimate friend and adviser of Archbishop Peter Richard Kenrick in matters that needed the immediate attention of the Prelate—the care of the poor and the orphans, and the selection of a suitable site for a new Catholic cemetery.[11] Art, journalism, charities, lecture courses, and the library of the *Catholic Institute* benefited by Capt. O'Flaherty's mature judgment and his financial acumen. He was a man of varied tastes with the means of gratifying them.

[11] Scharf, *op. cit.*, II, 1759.

Chapter III

A WRITER BORN TO MISSOURI

THE EVENT of great importance in the O'Flaherty family was the birth of a daughter Katherine, February 8, 1851.[1]

The great-grandmother, living at the O'Flaherty home since the death of her husband in 1849, found a new life for herself in the joy of this child's existence. For twelve years, till her death in 1863, this old lady, grand and yet composed in all her ways, domineered without disturbing the entire household by her interest in the child. She had the greatest influence on the girl's mind and heart and life. She had determined to arouse the child's curiosity and not let it be unsatisfied. Under her care the girl grew wise and thoughtful. For the old lady these years were one prolonged delight. The child became politely inquisitive. She learned to face all questions coolly and fearlessly—and grew self-contained, calmly possessed, and an enigma to her immediate elders. Neither vanity nor self-consciousness was a part of her nature.

The first interests Katherine O'Flaherty remembered centered about her father. Her earliest recollections were of him. To her young imagination—she was between four and five years of age at the time—he was a personage of mystery and the cause of questioning. Not that she had fear or terror in his presence. Her father showed his affection for his children in that agreeable manner of understanding which pleases the child nature. He was a perplexing mystery to her, nevertheless. Did he not go away every morning in the family carriage? She stood at the window, often on the steps, to watch him. Morning after morning during the week at the same hour those jet black horses, restless and proud; the negro footman, courteous and colorfully clad; the carriage, black and decorated with gold, were there to take her father away. Before long the carriage would return without him. *Why* did it return *without him?* Day after day she wondered and said nothing. Horses and carriage would come clattering up the cobbled street. The mystery and question were—where did her father go? Why did he not return? For the first time in her life her attention was aroused by a sense of concern.

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[1] The record of her baptism was destroyed in the tornado of 1896.

She tried but could not solve the problem by herself. She was always to be like that, a child who tried to solve questions and puzzles, and to ask the solutions only when her powers of discovery were of no avail.

One day she asked her father where he went and why the carriage came home without him. He enjoyed the questioning. It indicated that she was aware of things; was interested in life about her. Against the mild protests of Mother and Grandmother, but with the approval of the Great-grandmother, he promised to solve the mystery. Next day she could go with him. Excited and elated, she did drive away with him the next morning. The jet black horses moved away from the house over the cobbled streets. Before she realized it, she and her father were helped out of the carriage by the carefully dressed footman. They were at the Cathedral. The mystery was solved. Her father went to church every morning. She was somewhat disappointed, and in later life she could never tell why.[2] As the carriage drove away from the church, father and little daughter walked through the iron gates, up the stone steps, and into the church. It was dim within. Quietly taking holy water—her father held her up so her finger tips could reach the font—she blessed herself, and held his hand as he walked quickly to his pew.

How different this week-day church service from the Sunday Mass she had already attended. Today there were just a few people, just a few lights, just a few decorations. On Sundays how different; how crowded; how exciting! The little red light burned before the altar. She looked for that. It was there. She had noticed it on Sundays, and liked it—

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[2] In a letter from her son, Felix Chopin.

the color. Today the dimmer lights of the church hid the pictures on the wall. On Sundays she could trace the figures on them, and wonder about them. While she was peering at the wall the Mass was over. The priest had left the altar, the two pale candles had been put out, and her father, who had prayed devoutly, took her hand and led her out. In the clear morning sunlight he asked his little daughter a question. She did not hear it at first, because she was wondering about the difference between Church on Sunday and today. Again her father asked her the question. Did she want to go to the levee?

Before she could answer, the negro coachman, the jet black horses, and the carriage drove up to the church. Down Walnut Street it took them, carefully now. The way was more difficult and confused. At last the astonished child, more excited than perhaps she had ever been, clung to her father as he lifted her out of the carriage that had stopped in a narrow street, ugly and unpleasant. Church had been quiet. Here was confusion. It was the difference between business and religion. She wondered about that later on. The store was built on a sloping street on the water-front. The rear entrance was actually the second story, and as father and child moved through the building they came out in front on a balcony or gallery that looked over the levee and the busy river with its boats and its water traffic.

The child never forgot that first sight from the balcony of her father's business establishment. And when they went carefully down the bare narrow stairs to the Front Street entrance, and across the street and over to the levee that sloped down, well graded, to the shining river, there she saw more details of ships and shipping. The sheds on the levee were full of smells—of tar, fish, mud, hay, hides. Casks and ropes and chains and boxes were scattered about. Huge dark bargemen with great beards, and many singing negroes walked over planks leading into the river steamers lying head up-stream. She remembered well she was not allowed to cross the plank or go on the steamers. That hardly mattered. The adventure of that day was an enchanting experience.

These were her earliest impressions. The mystery that had surrounded the return of the empty carriage each morning was no longer to puzzle her young mind and imagination. To her came a certainty of her father's importance, and an affectionate regard for the localities associated with him. She remained fascinated by the details of life along the levee and the business of boats and water-front of St. Louis. Her lasting love of place began at this time. For her city she had an abiding regard; for the memory of her father a devotion that amounted to reverence. Her love for St. Louis is illustrated thoroughly and humorously by an experience she submitted to after the publication of her first collection of short stories. Friends and the publisher advised her to go to Boston where the atmosphere was supposed to be literary. She went, and after three days fled home to St. Louis.

Although Capt. O'Flaherty's boats were part of the rush and the competition that kept the levee alive with shipping, his business sagacity saw the dawning of the railroad era and found a new outlet in the wholesale produce market.[3]

He was one of the original stockholders of the Pacific Railroad. In 1855 the directors of this enterprise, with the purpose of securing further financial aid from the State, announced for the opening of the road a " Special Train " to convey the representatives and the legislature to Jefferson City, November 1. This train was wrecked crossing the new bridge over the Gasconade River, and Capt. O'Flaherty was one of the seventeen killed in the accident. He was buried from the Old Cathedral, the Church of St. Louis the King, on Sunday afternoon, November 4th. " The Archbishop performed the usual rites . . . and made a beautiful and touching address." [4]

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[3] W. L. Montague, *Illinois and Missouri State Directory for 1854–55. . . . To which is appended, a new and complete business directory of the city of St. Louis,* St. Louis, 1854, p. 226.

[4] *The Leader,* November 10th, 1855, p. 12. In this issue the accounts of the accident from the St. Louis newspapers: The *Republican,* The *Evening News* and *Evening Mirror* were reprinted entirely. In 1855 Capt. O'Fla-

The *Republican* of Monday, November 5th, states: "The remains of Capt. O'Flaherty were accompanied to the grave, on Sunday, by an immense number of his personal friends and those who respected him for his many virtues, and also by the Washington Guards, of which he was an honorary member."

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herty was directing the financial destinies of *The Leader* and of The Catholic Institute of St. Louis.

The part that he played in the journalistic project is sufficiently explained in the first issue, March 10, 1855:

"At a call meeting of the subscribers to the 'LEADER-FUND,' held at the rooms of the Catholic Institute, on Monday evening, February 26, THOS. O'FLAHERTY, ESQ., as chairman of a committee appointed at a former meeting, reported on the state of the finances, amount subscribed and amount collected, and at the same time tendered his resignation as one of said committee, which was followed by the others. The same being accepted, the subscribers proceeded to the election of a treasurer of the 'Leader Fund,' which resulted in the unanimous choice of Capt. O'Flaherty."

The Catholic Institute's expression of sympathy has been cherished with zealous care by his descendants. The clipping from *The Leader,* November 10, 1855, was placed with affectionate loyalty by Kate Chopin as "the first and most important" among the family papers for her children:

"At a meeting of the Catholic Institute, held on Tuesday evening, November 6th, 1855,

"On motion of R. F. Barry, Esq., a committee of ten was appointed to draft resolutions expressive of the sense of the Institute, on the occasion of the death of Capt. Thos. O'Flaherty, late a member of this Association.

"Rev. P. J. Ryan, Messrs. Alex. J. P. Garesche, Jno. E. Yore, Jos. E. Elder, and R. F. Barry were appointed said committee.

"After some time, Mr. Garesche presented, on the part of the committee, a preamble and resolutions, which were *unanimously* adopted:

"WHEREAS, Our fellow member, Capt. Thomas O'Flaherty, endeared to all of us by his urbanity of deportment, his firmness of purpose, purity of heart, unostentatious charity, and more particularly by the zeal with which he aided, as a layman, the success of every Catholic enterprise, has suddenly and in the midst of his usefulness been called from among us. Acknowledging the inability of the human mind, to scrutinize the mysterious dispensations of Providence, we bow in humble submission to the will of God, confessing that He rules all things for the best, and hope that though our brother is taken from our midst, he is only removed from this sphere of his usefulness, to another and a better world, where he reaps the reward promised to those whose lives, like his, have been spent in the path of Christian duty. To preserve upon our record these our sentiments in his regard,

"BE IT RESOLVED,

"1. That we, the surviving members of the Institute, deeply regret the loss of our fellow-member, Thos. O'Flaherty.

In Calvary Cemetery, on the Way of the Sorrowful Mother a high marble cross rises above a crumbling monument, the tomb of Capt. O'Flaherty. In the marble is this inscription:

In Memory of
Thomas O'Flaherty
Born
In Galway, Ireland
Died a victim of the Gasconade
Bridge disaster, Nov. 1, 1855
Aged 50 years.

Through the Gasconade disaster Katherine O'Flaherty became acquainted with the appalling horror of sudden death. The poignant grief and the prolonged, subdued sadness around her impressed upon her mind the awfulness of the calamity.

The household withdrew within itself. The activities in which Capt. O'Flaherty was engaged, or in which he was interested, had made his home and his family circle of relatives a joyous, enthusiastic place. The civic interests that claimed his attention were of a sort that gave him a sense of importance and communicated that same feeling to his family. His personal intimacy with Archbishop Kenrick filled a place

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"2. That by his death we have lost an active member, society a useful citizen, the Church a zealous son.

"3. That, while we thus deeply lament his death, we are not unmindful how little is our loss, compared with that of those who, in his decease, mourn for a husband, and a father, but to whom he leaves the priceless heritage of an unsullied name.

"4. That the Secretary enrol these resolutions upon the record, furnish a copy to the *Leader* for publication, and another copy to the widow of the deceased.

P. J. RYAN
President of the Catholic Institute, Chairman,
E. P. Walsh, Secretary."

The Institute was located in Verandah Row, an unusual group of buildings on Washington Avenue between Front and St. Charles Streets. A picture of Verandah Row is in John Hogan's *Thoughts About St. Louis,* published in St. Louis in 1854.

As a "Literary, Political and Family Newspaper" *The Leader,* edited by Jedediah V. Huntington, was published every Saturday from its own office on the corner of Second and Pine Streets.

in his own life that brought the actuality of religion through its representatives very close to him and his relatives. With his death all these activities ceased—suddenly. There was no male member of the family to take up the broken cords of his intensive interests—and these interests passed into other hands.

The day of the funeral with its great silences, the candles and the coffin, the still form within; the people crowding, the sobbing . . . what impressions for the child! And the solemnity of the burial service—solemn, serene, consoling—telling of Hope and Peace after death—how strange it all was to the child, again in the church, now dimmer than ever, where the father had taken her to quiet her imagination about his daily morning drives.

At the funeral she wondered. New questions she could not solve, but was to meet face to face many times before her own death, arose in her mind. This sudden death of her father was the first of the disasters that happened to members of her family or her relatives. Before she died, she was to know death in many strange forms.

While life moved on haltingly at first, the large household gradually adjusted itself to an order of life without the presence and pleasantries of Thomas O'Flaherty. The sudden catastrophe turned Mrs. O'Flaherty's mind more and more to religion. An intimacy grew up between child and mother that had not existed before. The daughter had admired the father with affectionate devotion. The sadness of the mother drew the child to her. In the silence of deep distress in the mother's heart, and strange wonder in the child's, a sympathy awoke that never ceased and never grew less while the mother lived.

Kate Chopin's stort story "The Dream of an Hour," in *Vogue,* December 6, 1894, has for its theme the surprising effect of a similar disaster upon Mrs. Mallard, whose husband is reported killed. Two slight changes made by the author in the text printed in the magazine are followed in the version reprinted for the first time in Part II, pages 223–225.

There is at least one person alive now who knew Katherine O'Flaherty and her mother in the sad years after 1855. Today at the age of eighty-two, active in mind and memory, Sister Katherine Garesché, a nun in the Society of the Sacred Heart, in the Convent at Grosse Pointe Farms, Michigan, has written the letters from which I have quoted passages that are both accurate in the details of memory, and give knowledge of the life of two girl chums in St. Louis before and during the Civil War. Sister Garesché in her first letter relates:

> I remember Mrs. O'Flaherty's face—sad and beautiful; but I *see* it too in a large oil painting in the parlor. As a living person I remember her as sad. This I explain to myself by knowing that her soul must have been shrouded in grief at her dear husband's untimely death.[5]

What of the effect on Katherine, the daughter? On November 12, 1907, Mrs. Lelia Hattersley, Kate Chopin's only daughter, wrote to Professor Leonidas Rutledge Whipple, of the University of Virginia, a letter that gives this information:

> When I speak of my mother's keen sense of humor and of her habit of looking on the amusing side of everything, I don't want to give you the impression of her being joyous, for she was on the contrary rather a sad nature. She was undemonstrative both in grief and happiness, but her feelings were very deep as is usual with such natures. I think the tragic death of her father early in her life, of her much loved brothers, the loss of her young husband and her mother, left a stamp of sadness on her which was never lost.

In the household, after Captain O'Flaherty's death, with the mother dwelt Katherine's grandmother and great-grandmother. Both viewed the situation differently, though each was an exceptionally religious woman. The grandmother accepted the situation with quiet resignation to the will of God; the other and older, with a renewed determination to be to the child a guide and an aid in understanding life and its vagaries. Her theories of education were distinctly unique for her day. She would teach this girl to face life and its problems without a trace of consciousness, hesitation, or embarrassment.

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[5] Letter of September 8, 1930.

She insisted always on the child speaking French to her, while she supervised eagerly the daily music lesson, watching the little fingers grow accustomed to the mechanics of piano playing. Stories told with fervor were the reward for lessons well learned. She continually stressed the nobility and generosity of the child's father. She taught her not to rely on appearances. For her proper direction in the path of virtue, she told the child accounts of the early days of St. Louis. One story that was repeated over and over, with sad and sordid explanations, was a vivid account that stirred Katherine O'Flaherty's interest in the intimacy of people's lives and minds and morals. (It was a favorite adage of the dear old soul that one may know a great deal about people without judging them. God did that.) Now conclusively proved to be a libel, that story narrated the supposed adulterous relations of Madame Chouteau with Laclède Ligueste.[6]

While the great-grandmother was filling the mind of the child with stories of questionable nature, at the same time the self-possessed young girl, with the inheritance of self-reliance and calmness from her father, was leading the otherwise normal life of a girl of her age and time.

At the Academy of the Sacred Heart where she began her formal education in September 1860, Katherine O'Flaherty became intimately acquainted with a young girl of her own age, Katherine Garesché. Their intimacy was unusually close and was not broken till the paths of separate vocations parted them in 1870—one married; the other became a Sacred Heart Nun. From Sister Garesché I have had many details of their youth in St. Louis and their intimacy:

> Kate and I first knew each other when, as wee tots, we went as Day Scholars to our old Convent on 5th Street, founded by our

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[6] Madame Charleville can be forgiven her credulity. For ninety years that libel was the stock in trade of gossip and of historians like Billon and Paul Beckwith. The legend was shattered by the painstaking researches of Alexander N. De Menil, published in the *St. Louis Globe Democrat,* October 16, 1921. De Menil's article, "Madame Chouteau Vindicated," established beyond further argument the fact that Madame Chouteau was a true, honest, and respectable wife and mother.

Venerable Mother Duchesne; but as our homes were very near one another, we were constantly together, sharing all our pleasures. These were climbing trees in summer, skating in winter, an occasional party with other children, riding a pony that Kate owned, always in the care of a faithful negro servant, but principally, and certainly first in our affection, music and reading—veritable passions. Kate's musical talent was remarkable, she played the piano both by ear and note. Perhaps in those early days we loved reading still more. Our story books were read together, often 'mid laughter and tears. It was the perusal of—I think—*Blind Agnes* that determined us to learn Italian. So *Ollendorf's Method* was bought unknown to anyone, and we began the study all by ourselves, as a great secret. I must confess that we soon reached a point which seemed to say to our puzzled brains: "Thus far shall you go and no farther."

Some of the books we read together before the summer of 1863 were—Grimm's *Fairy Tales, Blind Agnes, Paul and Virginia, Orphans of Moscow, Dickens for Little Folks,* a series: *Little Nell, Little Dorrit,* etc., *Queechy, The Wide Wide World, Scottish Chiefs, Days of Bruce, Pilgrims Progress.* We particularly loved *Zaidee*—a beautiful, old-fashioned romance; and *John Halifax, Gentleman.*

Of poetry we read the metrical romances of Scott, with his *Talisman* and *Ivanhoe,* with some of the chosen poems of Pope, Collins, and Gray.[7]

In another letter Sister Garesché tells their joys and amusements together, at home and at school:

The O'Flaherty residence was on Eighth Street near Chouteau Avenue, then one of the elite parts of the city. It was a large, handsome house, two stories and an attic, built in the Southern style, with a wide porch, extending the entire length, with a railing about three feet high between the columns that supported the roof. As Eighth Street was graded after the houses on the west side were built, the latter, from the gate of the grounds, had high flights of stone steps leading to the porch or front door.

The windows of the large Dining room on the opposite side looked onto the Garden. This garden was beautifully laid out, with flower beds and paths. In the centre was a stone column about four or five feet high, with a sun-dial on the top. At the end of the Garden were some large trees—some of those we used to climb—and going recklessly high perhaps—each trying to out-top the other.[8]

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[7] Letter of September 7, 1930.

In another letter Sister Garesché records the more official amusements or recreational activities of the children of their generation:

> Kate was only eight years old, with no sisters, only a brother who must have been younger than herself, for I recall only his name—Tom. George, her half-brother was older. These must have been the reasons why, instead of my going as much to her house, she came more often to ours where there was a band of little ones to make it noisy. *Indeed, she was my only friend ever allowed to stay overnight;* and my dear parents found their delight in making our evenings very pleasant. Charades, generally acted, games, and as we grew older, my father would read aloud.
>
> In our Garden she could play with a little fawn and feed it, or help bury and write an epitaph for a pet bird.[9]

Other delights and activities besides those at home have been preserved through the vivid recollections of Sister Garesché:

> St. Louis was a frontier town in the early fifties. Gentlemen could hunt deer and grouse within a short distance, and Kate could stand on the sidewalk to watch the " Indians come to town," riding on horseback in procession, every month, from some nearby Reservation.
>
> The streets of St. Louis in those days were very muddy. Some were paved with cobble stones as far as I remember. Omnibuses ran on the principal streets, and then horse cars. We children went with our parents in them. The " River Front " was always interesting because of the boats and the busy shops. I never went to slave sales, nor do I think Kate ever did, though we wanted to.
>
> The entertainments provided for children were of a much more elevated order, and of more educational value than those of the present day.
>
> At School we little ones were allowed to assist at the Solar Microscope views, thrown on the wall; and Kate and I must have been

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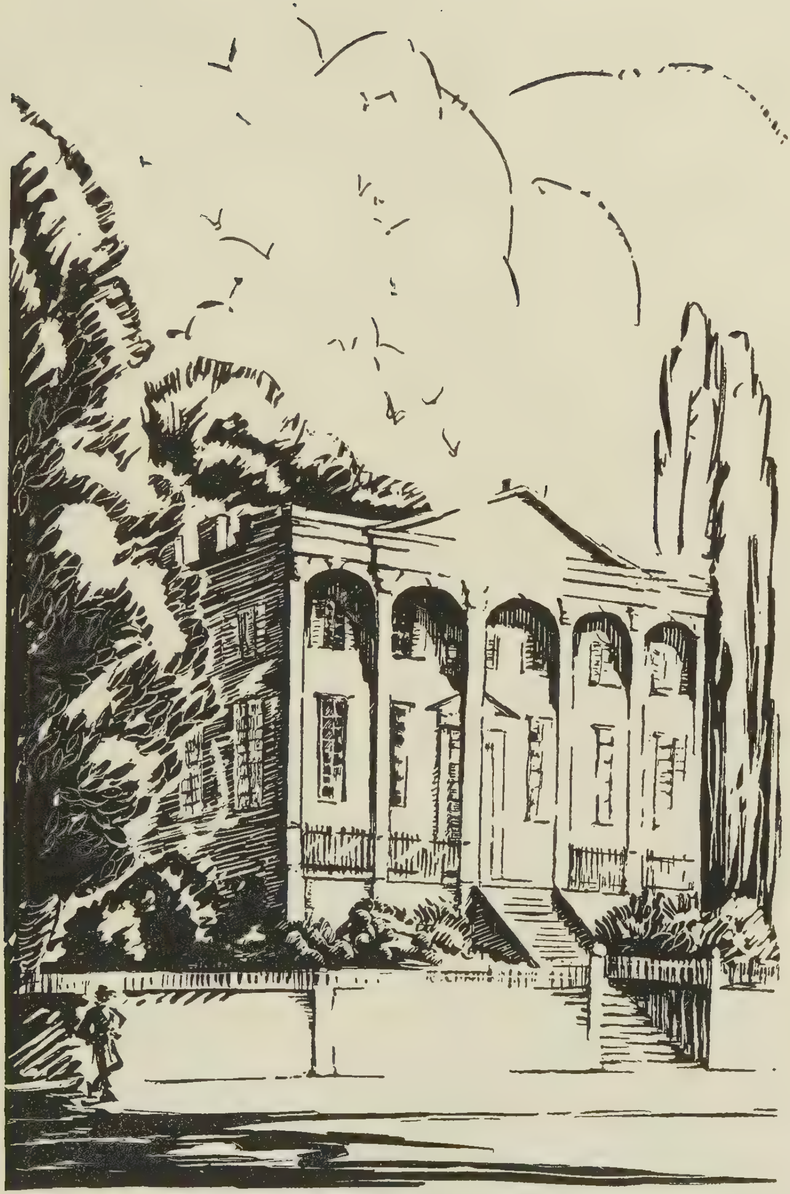
[8] Letter of September 15, 1930.

[9] Letter of September 7, 1930.



THE O'FLAHERTY HOME IN ST. LOUIS

seated side by side as the monsters in a drop of water were shown. Then, we were taken to such as taught good lessons. I remember a trained dog who went through the alphabet, putting his paw as called for on each letter printed on one-foot square cards. Bird shows, where they were harnessed to wagons, and shot off guns as mimic soldiers.

Tom Thumb came, and a child of three years old was as tall when placed by his side.

In the late 50's Dr. Kane gave an illustrated lecture with magic lantern slides of his Arctic Explorations, with one of his sledge dogs by his side. There was a fine Museum in the city to which we often went to examine fossils of extinct animals, rare coins, and reproductions of famous statues.

Sleight-of-hand exhibits came as a novelty.

To all these Kate was taken either by her own family or with us. I thought that I would write these details, since I remember them, to give an idea of the true environment in which we were brought up, and of the things we liked to talk about.[10]

Some special details of religion are given:

Kate's home was very near our Parish Church on Sixth Street—the *Annunciation,* built by Father Patrick Ryan, afterwards Bishop of St. Louis and then Archbishop of Philadelphia. It was an artistic gem, everything in it calculated to foster piety and educate our minds to spiritual realities.

Outside, over the front Door, was a large beautiful Statue of the Blessed Virgin; and over the main altar, on the vaulted ceiling, was frescoed figures, life-size, and an exquisite *Agony in the Garden.* Every Sunday at High Mass, Father Ryan preached one of his eloquent soul-stirring sermons.

On May 1, 1861, we both made our First Holy Communion, and were confirmed by Archbishop Kenrick in the dear old convent chapel. We had been prepared most carefully and fervently and I remember how we talked over together the secret emotions of that Day.[11]

All through her life, even though she no longer was a practical Catholic, Kate Chopin kept and treasured in her Album her First Communion holy picture. Fortunately this Album,

[10] Letter of September 21, 1930.

[11] Letter of September 14, 1930.

stamped in gold on a now faded tan covering, with the title "Leaves of Affection," has been preserved. Between illustrations of somber castles, gloomy graveyards, smirking guardian angels, and a windmill on a cliff, are interspersed varicolored pages filled with effusions of friendship and affection written and dated by schoolgirl acquaintances. The book is inscribed:

To Katie
From her Affectionate aunt Boyer
December 25, 1860.

Comments in Katherine O'Flaherty's handwriting are added to some of these effusions of friendship. One sixteen-line inscription on the happiness of memory caused the child to write after it: "Very pretty, but where's the point?"

After the lines:

Yes, Loving is a painful thrill,
And not to love more painful still,
But oh! it is the worst of pain,
To love, and not be loved again,

Katherine O'Flaherty added decisively, "Foolishness."

Only one friendship verse is given an approbation—the selection entitled "To Katy" that is signed "Kitty Garesché." It is approved with "My sweet friend Kitty." Sister Garesché writes of this:

> As the little poem bears my signature, I must have written it in dear Kate's album; but I completely forget having done so. It may have been a poem we both liked and I copied it for her, sure she would know it was *not* original. In those days diminutives were very much used for names. Thus Katherine was always called Katy.[12]

When Katherine O'Flaherty wrote "My sweet friend Kitty" she was expressing sincere and lasting affection. It was the one unbroken friendship of her life. In the *Diary* of her honeymoon trip in Europe during 1870 there is mention of receiving and writing a letter to Kitty Garesché. After her husband's death, Kate Chopin visited her only real lasting friend for the consolation of a renewed intimacy. In 1900 when the unfavorable reception given *The Awakening* had hurt Kate Chopin more than she cared to admit, her mind and heart found solace and expression in a little unpublished poem.

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[12] Letter of October 29, 1930.

TO THE FRIEND OF MY YOUTH:
TO KITTY.

It is not all of life
To cling together while the years glide past,
It is not all of love
To walk with clasped hands from first to last.
That mystic garland which the spring did twine
Of scented lilac and the new-blown rose,
Faster than chains, will hold my soul to thine
Thro' joy and grief, thro' life—unto its close.

KATE CHOPIN

Aug. 24th 1900

Toward the end of her life Kate Chopin apparently began to write reminiscences of her youth. Only one page of these papers remains, without title or date. Fortunately the remarks refer to Kitty Garesché.

> It was at this time [1860] that I formed a friendship with Kitty Garesché; a friendship which lasted all through our childhood and youth and which, I will not say ended—but was interrupted by her entering the Sacred Heart Convent as a religious in 1870—the year that I was married. We divided our " picayune's " worth of candy—climbed together the highest cherry trees; wept over the " Days of Bruce " and later, exchanged our heart secrets.

A small portrait of Kitty Garesché is pasted beside these remarks.

Only once did Kate Chopin in her short stories write of convent life. " Lilacs," one of her most artistic achievements, was published as a special feature story in the New Orleans *Times Democrat,* December 20, 1896. The portrayal of the French Mother Superior, a woman of unruffled tenacity and implacable suspicion, " whose dignity would not permit her to so much as step outside the door of her private apartments to welcome [an] old pupil," is a caustic but living characterization.

Chapter IV

A GENTLE ENIGMA

IN THE grim years of the Civil War Katherine O'Flaherty was St. Louis's picturesque "Littlest Rebel." George, her half brother, enlisted as a private in Company A. Boone's Regiment of "Missouri Mounted Infantry." Her devotion to him intensified the ardor of her attachment to the cause for which he had left home—and her.

Sister Garesché has not forgotten that period:

> Then came the Civil War with all its thrilling and very sad events for Missouri. The Legislature passed the Act of Secession, but the State was kept in the Union by force of Arms. Saint Louis was placed under Martial Law. Barracks and a Prison were opened very near Kate's beautiful old home. Both our families took the Southern side; and Kate came very near being arrested for tearing down a Flag which an unknown hand had fastened to the Porch of the House. She was only saved by the kind, timely interference of a neighborly friend, an eminent physician and a strong Unionist. Another day we gathered a bouquet of flowers from Kate's beautiful garden—and we gave them to the Sentinel for the Southern prisoners in the near-by old Medical College which had been turned into a Prison.[1]

The flag episode is one of the memories of the family. Katherine stuffed the disputed flag into a bag of scraps, and the Union officers who searched her home never found what they sought. For years that small torn flag was a treasured possession of one of Kate Chopin's sons.

She did not forget the incident, for in 1897, after a girlhood friend had published a book of memoirs, Kate Chopin wrote half humorously in the March 20 issue of *The Criterion:*

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[1] Letter of September 7, 1930.

I was seized with an insane desire to do likewise.

I was set upon the idea of memoirs, and at once started out to make a beginning. But a very serious obstacle met me. I found that my memory was of that order which retains only the most useless rubbish, while all recollections of those charming episodes —those delightful experiences which I, no doubt, shared in common with others of my age and condition—had completely deserted me.

It was then that I bethought me of a friend, one of the reminiscent kind, whose " don't you remembers " and " it-was-in-the-summer-of-seventy-sixes " had often startled me with their unerring precision and cocksureness. I sent for him. He came. He was delighted with my project.

" Memoirs! " he exclaimed, rubbing his hands together, " Capital idea! You want me to help you out? First rate notion of yours," seating himself in the corner of the sofa. I had taken a seat at no great distance away, pencil and pad in hand, ready for business.

" What I want," I told him, " is for you to spur my memory; remind me of all manner of pleasant little Past events calculated to give sparkle to the pages of a memoir—so now! "

" Well," he said, leaning with his elbows on his knees, " you've got to begin at the beginning. Let's see: suppose you tell about the time I took you to— "

" These are not your memoirs; they are mine," I reminded him rather coldly.

" Oh! all right. Then you might write of how you tore down the Union flag from the front porch when the Yanks tied it up there; and of the night the prisoners escaped from the Gratiot street prison and hid in the lilac bushes, and we all—you all went out with lanterns— "

" You must think I want to write war papers, don't you? "

Eventually no memoirs were written, even though memory seems to have had real material.

The " near-by " prison, mentioned by Sister Garesché, was the new, unfinished, Missouri Medical College building seized by the Federal Military authorities when war was declared. Designed in the shape of an octagon, built of stone, with foundation walls six feet thick, this singular building was the result of the eccentric imagination of Dr. J. N. McDowell. The odd plan was patterned after the form of a stove that had heated the amphitheatre of the former college building. Obsessed by the idea that the Jesuits were bitterly opposed to him, imagining his life in constant danger, Dr. McDowell produced an original plan for a Medical College—a fortress eight stories high topped by bristling ramparts.

When the war broke out this " grand, gloomy, strongly constructed building " became Gratiot Street Prison.

George O'Flaherty, with a soldier chum from Arkansas, was captured by Union troops August 18, 1862, in St. Louis County and brought to Gratiot Street Prison before being sent to the Military Prison at Alton, Illinois. The kind Union doctor who had intervened for Katherine in the flag episode appealed to the military authorities to have George's chum, severely ill from exposure and tuberculosis, paroled under his care. In consequence, the sick soldier was removed from the prison to the O'Flaherty home. He died suddenly a week later.

After a lingering month of imprisonment—from August 20 to September 23, 1862—George was sent from Alton to Vicksburg, Mississippi, to be exchanged. An entry in the Adjutant General's Office in Washington records that George O'Flaherty was " exchanged, Aiken's Landing, November 11, 1862." On the way to St. Louis to join his regiment George O'Flaherty made a hurried visit to the parents of his Arkanas chum, near Little Rock. By one of the tragic accidents of life he became ill there with typhoid fever and died at the home of his friend.

His tombstone is the mute testimony to the strange coincidence.

George
Son of
Thomas O'Flaherty
Born in St. Louis
and died at Little Rock, Ark.
Feb. 17, 1863
Aged 23 years.

Katherine O'Flaherty, deprived by death of father and two brothers, had lost in January, 1863, her great-grandmother.

Evidently a writer for a French newspaper in St. Louis made this friendly effort in English to tell of Madame Charleville's life and death:

> Died on Friday, January 6, 1863, at seven o'clock P. M. at the residence of her grand-daughter, Mrs. Eliza O'Flaherty, Victoria Charleville, aged 82 years and 10 months. She died a true Christian and was universally beloved. Mrs. Charleville was the widow of Joseph Charleville, formerly a well known citizen, who deceased 18 years since. She was born in St. Louis and lived there all her life, of course, witnessing strange mutations in the appearance of the city, and great changes in its social aspects and in the governments to which it has been subjected. She had seen French and Spanish lieutenant governors and lived under all the Presidents of the American Republic, who thus figured in its annals. She was a lady of estimable character and leaves a numerous family of children, grandchildren, and great-grandchildren to lament her loss.[2]

Madame Charleville had a full life, one of constant interest and satisfying variety. In reality she was "universally beloved" in St. Louis.

Katherine O'Flaherty's first extant writings—mere school compositions—and personal comments are in a "Common Place Book" dated 1867. "Her teacher at that time," writes Sister Garesché, "was one of our nuns most gifted for composition in both verse and prose; it was she who doubtless developed Kate's talent for writing, because as children we never attempted anything in that line, so far as I can remember."

Perhaps it was this nun who aroused the personal interest in reading necessary to induce a pupil of sixteen to copy lengthy extracts from various authors studied in class or read for pleasure. Characteristically, Katherine O'Flaherty's first written extract is a passage from Bulwer's *My Novel*—three extensive paragraphs about youth's reading and day dreaming. A partial list of these "extracts" will indicate what the pupils of the Academy were allowed to read when Kate Chopin was a girl of sixteen and seventeen.

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[2] Quoted in *Biographical and Historical Memoirs of Northwest Louisiana*, Nashville and Chicago, 1890, p. 333.

Macaulay's essay on *Ranke's History of the Popes* and his description of the *Character of Louis XIV* are placed near a genealogical and descriptive list of the *Reigning Sovereigns of Europe.* Charles Lamb's *Character of a Scotchman* is between long quotations from Chateaubriand's *Le Montagnard Emigré* and Longfellow's *Hyperion.* The diversity of her reading is illustrated by the *Sicilian Vespers,* by parts of *Lady Blessington's Conversations with Byron,* by *The Healing of the Daughter of Jairus* of Willis, and by paragraphs from Mrs. Jameson's *Sketches of Art.*

Goethe's *Gedunden* and parts of *Wilhelm Meister,* with *Das Schloss am Mer* by Ludwig Uhland and *Schlof ein, mein Herz* by Rückert, complete the selection of German quotations that is introduced by Hans Christian Andersen's *Bilderbuch ohne Bilder, Erster Abend.* Victor Hugo's *Espoir,* Lamartine's *Le Lac,* and *La Petite Mendiante* of Boucher de Perthes come before her comments on Lamartine's *Graziella.*[3]

Katherine O'Flaherty's own comments are an index to her mind as well as to her training. The first expression of her own opinion is written after the extract from Macaulay's essay, *Ranke's History of the Popes:*

> It is to me a subject of wonder that a mind such as Macaulay's; so enlightened and free from bigotry, should have considered the Catholic Church a mere work of "human policy." He yields however to this politic work a superiority and primacy, in which we see every evidence of a divine institution.

More immediately personal and amusing are her ideas after beginning to read H. W. Preston's translation of the *Life and Letters of Madame Swetchine* by the Count De Falloux. This translation, published by Roberts Brothers in Boston in 1867, must have come to Katherine O'Flaherty a short time after its issue from the press. She writes:

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[3] Shorter extracts were copied from Pope, Shakespeare, Young, Halleck, Cowper, Collins, Thomson, Dryden, Milton, Swift, Gray, Madame de Staël, Melancthon, Byron, Scott, Ben Jonson, and Chesterfield. Quotations from Byron, Shakespeare and Pope predominate.

> The *Life of Madame Swetchine* is a queer book—which did not interest me much. In fact translations from the French or German rarely interest me; because French and German notions and ideas are so different from the English—that they lose all their naïve zest by being translated into that most practical of tongues. That "portrait of Fontenelle" is given in a piquant manner;—I should have preferred reading it in French but was unable to procure the book. I like it because I can glance over it as an occasional reminder that a monster once lived upon earth; and besides I know persons who resemble M. de Fontenelle in more respects than one. His redeeming trait is the patience with which he could listen. His dislike for music reminds me of a joke told at my expense. Mama one afternoon sent me in the parlor to entertain a gentleman, who, though deemed bashful has never yet succeeded in making that ingredient in his composition known to myself. I immediately took to the piano as the most pleasing way both to himself and me of filling my mission of entertainer. Wishing to suit his taste whatever it might be, I played pieces of every variety: operas—sonatas—meditations—Galops—Nocturnes—Waltzes —& gigs—after accomplishing which I turned to him expecting approbation if not praise and admiration; when to my utmost dismay, he coolly informed me that there was nothing on earth he disliked more than music—at any time—in any place—and of any kind from a brass band to a jew's harp.

Sister Garesché notes Katherine's musical talent:

> Her musical memory had become remarkable. She would go to the opera of an evening; then the next morning be able to reproduce by ear the parts she liked best.[4]

The mottled, green-covered note book of 1866, 1867, and 1868 contains some of her own earliest writings, interspersed between the lengthy portions copied from favorite authors. The first is on a theme certainly familiar to her—Death, evidently that of a classmate. No indication of her future skill is evident in these outpourings.

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[4] Letter of September 7, 1930.

THE EARLY DEAD.

TO THE MEMORY OF MINNIE ENNINGER 1866

Death comes not among us, without bringing sorrow to the heart. Even though it be upon the soul of the aged that he lays his icy hold, we still, in sadness, heave a sigh over the bier of the departed one, and breathe a silent prayer for her eternal happiness. How then express the grief with which we follow the young, the gifted, the beautiful to the silent tomb. Alas why should the spring flower, so favored with graces, so dowered with loveliness, in preference to the faded and drooping be snatched from our midst? Where is now the rich fresh intellect, the visions of future womanly happiness to which she eagerly looked forward, and which were to form the accomplishment of those many and varied hopes! Ask it of Death!

The girl of fifteen, writing of "the visions of future womanly happiness," continues in a vein of sentimental melancholy that reflects her school readings in the eighteenth century's Graveyard Poets, while paragraphs of homiletic calibre carry on to the conclusion:

Mourn not therefore, when Death comes into our gardens culling the flowers of Spring, for in their early beauty, how far more pleasing an offering are they to God than when sere and drooping. Then in their fragrant purity, their happy innocence, they tell the Saviour in language of eloquence, that He has not visited us in vain, that all on earth is not corruption, and that there are still flowers awaiting to be plucked; beautiful flowers untainted by the rankling weed.

Blessed indeed are the holy living struggling with hope and love in the combat of life, but doubly blessed are the youthful dead.

More than likely Katherine O'Flaherty's first poem came a year later. It is a courageous attempt in verse to describe at length in fifteen quatrains the memories and visions of an old man.

After a long, dull, and platitudinous effusion about Pagan Art, Ancient Art, and Christian Sculpture, Painting, Poetry—and the Influence of Christianity upon Music—her book contains a really natural composition in verse. It is a spontaneous and charming episode of her school life, entitled "The 'Congé'—1867," with this note of explanation appended:

The "Congé," the last at which the day scholars are permitted to mingle with the boarders, was given in honor of Mother Galwey's feast. The "Madame" alluded to in the poem was our much loved teacher Madame O'Meara. The day following we were given, for a class-exercise, the subject of the past day's amusement.

The Congé is past and the frolic and fun
Was over, before it seemed scarcely begun;
For with playing and romping and teasing away,
The quick fleeting hours soon filled up the day.
But the morning was not to amusement devoted
For *Madame* to all of her "Brights" had allotted
The task (this displayed a heart ever trusting)
Of arranging and breaking and mending and dusting
Her chemical tools, which of delicate make
We could easily handle—and easily break.
There was Lizzie who thought with importance of air
That we could do nothing if she were not there,
And Frank—thinking much, and speaking but little
Who handled with safety tools e'en the most brittle;
While Katie O'Flaherty, poor unfortunate lass,
Broke implements stoutest as though they were glass.
But this war of destruction, thanks, soon was to cease
And the room and its contents left happily in peace.
For kind Madame Hamilton, with due form and state,
Announced the dinner no longer could wait,
And arranging the girls with artistical taste,
Led the way to the hall without trouble or haste.
But ye Fates! On arriving I found 'twas my doom,
For want I presume of more benches or room,
To sit between Lizzie and Nina my cousin
Who seemed to have appetites due to a dozen,
And gave me scarce time to breathe or to think
With asking for butter—the bread—or a drink.
But between these demands which indeed were not few,
I found time to admire an arrangement or two

Of the garlands of flowers and pigs à la fry
Which in every direction were greeting the eye.
But all these, howe'er beautiful, sink into nought,
In considering the fun which the afternoon brought;
For through cellar and basement and garret so high,
We tumbled and tossed in the game of "I spy."
Now into the barn yard—the loft or the stable,
Hiding in every place—any place that we were able;
And thrown into ecstasies of foolish delight
At not being found or at seeking aright.
But at length Madame M. with mysterious air,
Came whispering that the girls must prepare
To enter a room, shut out from all light,
To see a strange thing—a most wonderful sight:
Which sight we soon found was a new source of pleasure
Got up by "our Madame" whose mind is a treasure,
Ever teeming with jewels of science and fun,
And in whom we all think sets and rises the sun.
'Twas a strange magic lantern which displayed a queer sight
Of devils in every conceivable plight.
Of hills and volcanoes; St. Peter's at Rome;
Of Pantheons at Paris—or a neat cottage home.
Of monkies and tigers and elephants rare—
All displayed with precision and mentioned with care.
But my keen disappointment one cannot conceive,
When, at the best part we are told we must leave;
For fear that the already fast fading light
Would leave us in fear at the coming of night.
And I reluctantly arose to obey,
Though my reason said "homeward" my heart bade me stay.
So greatly put out—nearly ready to cry,
I kissed my companions—bade Madame good bye—
And secretly knowing I'd no time to waste
Turned my steps towards home with all possible haste.

No more extracts or original compositions were written out during that school year. In June, 1868, Katherine O'Flaherty graduated from the Academy, and her more intimate Diary begins. Her appearance and personality at that time are well remembered by Sister Geresché.

I do not think Kate resembled her mother so much as her father. Now-a-days she would be described as an "Irish Beauty." She was not tall. Her very abundant dark hair drooped in a wave, lower on one side than on the other, which gave her a very arch, sprightly expression. Her eyes were brown, and looked right at you. She had a droll gift of mimicry. Though she was the object of great admiration, she accepted it in a matter-of-fact way and did not seem a bit vain. She had remarkable self-possession, a certain poise of manner, though very sweet and simple. Her laugh was quiet; her voice gentle and low. It seems to me, that in her, intellect predominated and kept the passions cool.[5]

She is now a young lady taking her place in the social life of St. Louis. Her opinions and perplexities are candidly expressed. No doubt she was an enigma to many. If she experienced the abandon of unrestrained gaiety—as it appears she did—afterwards her mind kept "reasoning, reasoning, reasoning . . . and coming to no conclusions."

Parties, operas, concerts, balls, skating, and—"general spreeing"—a colorful phrase—seem more modern than would be expected of St. Louis in 1868! Katherine O'Flaherty detested it all at times. "I feel as though I should like to run away and hide myself; but there is no escaping."

The musical life of St. Louis during the years 1860–1870, in which Katherine O'Flaherty participated, is described in profuse detail by Joseph A. Dacus, whose lively *Tour of St. Louis* appeared in 1878. The author recalls the Concerts by the Philharmonic Society (always preceded by "excessive fiddle scraping, flute tooting, and horn blowing") under the direction of Sobolewski and Egmont Froelich, who "did a great deal for music in St. Louis, introducing, though imperfectly, many works new to us."

Opera could be heard at De Bar's Opera House, or at the Apollo Theatre where Habelmann's German Opera Troupe "presented over forty different works." The orchestra was *never* good. "Poor Schram, an able nervous fiery conductor, wore out his life trying to direct the Apollo orchestra. Schuler took it easy, and Ernestinoff worked hard. Santa merely wiggled his little baton, and the men played without looking at him, save once when he sat down on his fiddle."[6]

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[5] Letter of September 28, 1930.

Visiting musicians who came for public concerts usually attracted an audience of several thousand enthusiasts to the Grand Hall of the Mercantile Library, boastfully considered at that time "the most magnificent Hall in the United States."[7] In December 1868, the violin virtuoso Ole Bull inspired the first writing in Katherine O'Flaherty's Diary:

OLE BULL

December 1868. Last evening I enjoyed the pleasure of hearing the famous violinist Ole Bull; never having heard him before, I was at once delighted and surprised. He came forward upon the stage, and was greeted with the most enthusiastic applause. His age I should judge to be between sixty and seventy; but though old he is still handsome—tall, straight and robust. His countenance is excessively pleasing; his hair of an iron gray and his whole appearance that of a gentleman of the old school. He handles his instrument, as I thought tenderly, as though it were some thing he loved, and in his performance is perfectly at ease—displaying nothing of that exaggerated style most usually seen in fine violinists. His selections were mostly those of his own composition, and these I preferred to his borrowed pieces.

To describe the effect his music had upon me would be impossible. It seemed the very perfection of the art, and while listening to him, I for the first time longed to be blind, that I might drink it all in undisturbed and undistracted by surrounding objects. I presume I have heard him for the first and last time, as he is now old and returning to Europe, without the intention, I understand, of ever revisiting the United States.

The last day of that year was not an agreeable one for the young lady.

New Year's Eve. Dec. 31, 1868. Rain! Rain! Rain! I am going to receive calls tomorrow— My first winter I expect a great many visits. I trust the weather will change. This rain is intolerable.

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[6] Joseph A. Dacus, *Tour of St. Louis,* St. Louis, 1878, pp. 59 and 63.

[7] Taylor and Crooks, *Sketch Book of St. Louis,* St. Louis, 1858, p. 67.

What a nuisance all this is—I wish it were over. I write in my book for the first time for months; parties, operas, concerts, skating and amusements *ad infinitum* have so taken up my time that my dear reading and writing that I love so well have suffered much neglect.

1869. Yesterday, Feb. 24th, I made my first appearance at the "German Reading Club," and from this [study] I hope to be able to speak the language more and more fluently. . . .

Heigh ho! This is one of my blue days. Reading, music, German, walking, skating—all of which are this morning within the range of my ability—have no attraction for me.

Thursday, March 25, 1869. Holy Thursday—and no sun—no warmth—no patch of blue sky, nothing to make one's heart feel glad; nothing but mud in the streets, and an incessant rain pattering against the pavements, making the passers-by look blue and cold and miserable. I feel in a very idle humor today—and a little cross at thinking that my proposed visit to the churches by moonlight, has been so disagreeably interrupted.

In three more days Lent will be over—and then commence again with renewed vigor—parties, theatres and general spreeing. I feel as though I should like to run away and hide myself; but there is no escaping. I am invited to a ball and I go. I dance with people I despise; amuse myself with men whose only talent lies in their feet; gain the disapprobation of people I honor and respect; return home at day break with my brain in a state which was never intended for it; and arise in the middle of the next day feeling infinitely more, in spirit and flesh like a Lilliputian, than a woman with body and soul. I am diametrically opposed to parties and balls; and yet when I broach the subject, they either laugh at me —imagining that I wish to perpetrate a joke; or look very serious; shake their heads and tell me not to encourage such silly notions.

I am a creature who loves amusements. I love brightness and gaiety and life and sunshine. But is it a rational amusement, I ask myself, to destroy one's health, and turn night into day? I look about me, though, and see persons *so* much better than myself, and *so* much more pious engaging in the self same pleasures —however I fancy it cannot have the same effect upon them as it does upon me.

Heigh ho! I wish this were the *only* subject I have doubts upon. One does become so tired—reasoning, reasoning, reasoning till night and coming to no conclusions—it is to say the least slightly unsatisfactory.

A friend who knows me as well as anyone is capable of knowing me—a gentleman, of course—told me that I had a way in conversation of discovering a person's characteristics, opinions, and private feelings, while they knew no more about me at the end than they knew at the beginning of the conversation. Is this laudable? Bah! I'll not reason it, for whatever my conclusion, I'll be sure to follow my inclination.

What a dear good confidant my book is. If it does not clear my doubts, at least it does not contradict and oppose my opinions. You are the only one, my book, with whom I take the liberty of talking about myself. I must tell you a discovery I have made—the art of making oneself agreeable in conversation. Strange as it may appear it is not necessary to possess the faculty of speech. A dumb person, provided he be not deaf, can practice it as well as the most voluble. All required of you is to have control over the muscles of your face—to look pleased and chagrined, surprised, indignant, and under every circumstance—interested and entertained. Lead your antagonist to talk about himself. He will not enter reluctantly upon the subject, I assure you—and twenty to one—he will report you as one of the most entertaining and intelligent persons, although the whole extent of your conversation was but an occasional "What did *you* say?"—"What did *you* do?"—"What do *you* think?"

On that principle you see, my friend, you are very entertaining; but I must admit that for want of a sympathetic countenance *tu es non peu ennuyant*—(what I would never dare tell a mortal) so I will leave you for my new friend Mr. "Harry Lorrequer"; not as edifying a book, I grant you, as would be advisable for Holy Week, but Gott in Himmel! were I to resume the thread of Sister Mary Catherine Macaulay's life—which in a devout mood the other day I began—that, together with the rain and the sky, would by evening throw me into such a fit of blue moralizing and contempt of the species as to render me unbearable to the rather large household for weeks to come—a situation not "devoutly to be wished."

Saturday, May 8th, 1869. What a bore it is to begin a story, become interested in it and have to wait a week before you can resume it. Thus have I devoured in *Appleton's Journal* (a new paper by the way) "The Man Who Laughs" by V. Hugo, devoured it to the very last word of the last number and must wait till next Saturday to satisfy in a small degree my ravenous appetite.

O what a lovely pen—how I adore this quality. Can anyone explain to me how hairs and such rubbish get at the point of a pen and make one's writing—not already perfect—look like the trail of a spider with his legs dipped in ink. I see no hairs in the ink bottle—and still here are visible proofs of them. They are like Topsy, they just "growed."

March 25th and May 8th—quite a span. Let me see, what have I been doing with myself. Three weeks consumed in going to New Orleans and coming back again, and what a trip it was; Mother, Miss Rosie, (poor Rosie), Mrs. Sloan, Mamie, Nina and myself formed the party. Not remarkably gay for me when one reflects that Mother is a few years older than myself—Rosie an invalid—Mrs. Sloan a walking, breathing nonentity—Mamie a jovial giggler, and Nina a child.

New Orleans I like immensely. It is so clean, so white and green. Although in April, we had profusions of flowers, strawberries, and even blackberries. One evening I passed in New Orleans which I shall never forget—it was so delightful and novel. Mamie and I were invited to dine and spend the evening with a Mrs. Bader, a German lady. She with her husband and two brothers-in-law, lived in a dear little house near Esplanade St., a house with an immensity of garden. One of the brothers was a gay, stylish and very interesting fellow—with whom Mamie fell very much *inamorata.* I quaffed all sorts of ales and ices—talked French and German—listened enchanted to Mrs. Bader's exquisite singing and for two or three hours was as gay and happy as I ever have been in my life. Mrs. Bader had been but a year married. She was the famous Miss Ferringer—Singer and Shauspielerin, who in order to support indigent parents went upon the stage, thereby not only retaining respect but gaining it from every quarter. Her talents and womanly attractions won her a kind and loving husband—Mr. Bader—one of the first merchants of New Orleans and a man worth $600,000.

She was reading Lamartine's *Graziella* at this time. Her ardently romantic feelings are not repressed.:

"Poor Graziella"? No, rich Graziella! Happy Graziella! To have now not only the tears, the remembrance of Lamartine, but an offering of his rich and rare talents to the shrine of her memory.—The story is doubly enhanced when we think that it is really an episode, a cherished one in the life of the gifted writer. What tears of grief, of indignation does one not shed over its pages—tears all ending in forgiveness. For at the end we feel an assurance that Graziella has conquered—since her heart's idol, years after her death,—weeps at her remembrance.

Twelve months passed before another word was written in the diary.

Chapter V

THE HONEYMOON DIARY

KATHERINE O'FLAHERTY did not meet her future husband in the spring of 1869, the time of her first visit to New Orleans. During the winter of that year she became acquainted with Oscar Chopin in St. Louis. He was taking a gentleman's interest in the progressive business and banking methods of Louis A. Benoist, a relative of his mother. At Oakland, the Benoist estate in St. Louis County where Louis Benoist, surrounded by the numerous happy children of his three marriages, maintained his home and entertained his friends in lavish fashion, Katherine O'Flaherty met Oscar Chopin. All through her life the mention of Oakland recovered the fervent memories of her youth when love came to her heart.

To her diary she confided her hopes and her dreams.

May 24th, 1870 St. Louis. Exactly one year has passed since my book and I held intercourse, and what changes have occurred! Not so much outwardly as within. My book has been shut in a great immense chest, buried under huge folios through which I could never penetrate, and I—have not missed it. Pardon me, my friend, but I never flatter you.

All that has transpired between then and now vanishes before this one consideration—in two weeks I am going to be married; married to the right man. It does not seem strange as I thought it would. I feel perfectly calm, perfectly collected. And how surprised every one was, for I had kept it so secret.

At the top of the next page she began to write as if each letter was formed with delicate care:

June 8th, Wednesday. Tomorrow I will be married. It seems to me so strange that I am not excited. I feel as quiet and calm as if I had one or two years of maiden meditation still before me. I am contented—a . . . .

The sentence breaks off abruptly. Nothing more was ever written on that page. The next entry begins the Diary of her honeymoon in Europe.

THREE MONTHS ABROAD.

June 9th, 1870. My wedding day! How simple it is to say and how hard to realize that I am married, no longer a young lady with nothing to think of but myself and nothing to do. We went to holy communion this morning, my mother with us, and it gave me a double happiness to see so many of my friends at Mass for I known they prayed for me on this happiest day of my life.[1] The whole day seems now like a dream to me; how I awoke early in the morning before the household was stirring and looked out of the window to see whether the sun would shine or not; how I went to Mass and could not read the prayers in my book; afterwards how I dressed for my marriage—went to church and found myself married before I could think what I was doing. What kissing of old and young! I never expected to receive so many embraces during the remainder of my life. Oscar has since confessed that he did not know it was customary to kiss and that he conferred that favor on only a very few. I will have to make a most sacred apology for him when I get home. It was very painful to leave my mother and all at home; and it was only at starting that I discovered how much I would miss them and how much I would be missed. We met several acquaintances on the cars who congratulated us very extensively, and who could not be brought to realize that they must call me Mrs. Chopin and not Miss Katy. They joined us however in consuming a few champagne bottles that had escaped the dire destruction of their companions to meet with a more honorable consummation by the bride and groom.

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[1] The marriage register in the Holy Angels Church reads:

On the 9th day of June 1870 I the undersigned priest have united in the bonds of matrimony Oscar Chopin, son of J. B. Chopin and Julie Benoist of the first part and Kate O'Flaherty daughter of Thomas O'Flaherty and Eliza Faris of the second part.

Witness: Charles A. Faris, Eliza O'Flaherty, Anna McAllister, Andrew McAllister.

Rev. F. M. Keilty.

10th Cincinnati. Reached Cincinnati at 6 this morning and will leave with quite a pleasing impression of the "Queen City," a title which St. Louisians must be permitted to dispute. It is a nice cheerful place, and though we saw very little of it, still we saw enough to discover that the handsome bridge over the Ohio, deserves all the admiration which I know the good people wish bestowed upon it, and that the sole life sustaining article of the inhabitants is *Beer,* simply Beer; without it they would cease to live—"vanish in thin air." In saying so I do not speak from my own observation, mind, although it was extensive enough to warrant my saying; but from private information received from a gentleman, native of the city, whose name it would be treason to disclose. In our afternoon walk we met Mr. Dobmeyer who was very much surprised and seemingly pleased to see us. He took us to a little amateur concert which did not amount to a row of pins, and afterwards to the rehearsal of the great "Saenger Fest," which I believe and hope will prove a success. Farewell to Cincinnati and a fond farewell to its Beer Gardens—may their number never grow less!

12th Philadelphia. Arrived in Philadelphia this afternoon and have come to the Continental Hotel. What a long, dusty, tedious trip; and what a gloomy puritanical looking city! Perhaps it is owing to the Sabbath that everything should look so miserable, for positively the people all look like Quakers—and the very houses resemble them with their odious red brick fronts, and those everlasting white shutters! Oh! those white shutters; what rows and rows and miles of them! Will not *someone,* out of spite, out of anything, put up a black blind, or a blue blind, or a yellow blind—anything but a white blind. Fairmount is pretty though, a very pretty park, and I hardly think we will see any lovelier view in Europe than we had from the rising ground of the park, of the Schuylkill river, bright and sparkling, with its picturesque little boathouses—the city—like Campbell's mountain looking more *enchanting* in the *distance,* and the full round moon staying the departure of twilight. It was a *lovely* night! And I thought of how the moonlight looked at Oakland. The moon knew better how to honor the Sunday than did the people—for it filled us with happiness and love.

13th. The city looked a little less gloomy today, the stores being all opened and a great many people on the streets. We saw a few pretty girls on Chestnut Street whose chief beauty consisted in their lovely complexions. We were not sorry to take the 6 P. M. train for New York. The ride in the cars was long, but extremely agreeable, and besides we had the honor and pleasure of making the acquaintance of Miss Claflin,[2] the notorious "female broker" of New York, a fussy, pretty, talkative little woman, who discussed business with Oscar, and entreated me not to fall into the useless degrading life of most married ladies—but to elevate my mind and turn my attention to politics, commerce, questions of state, etc. etc. I assured her I would do so, which assurance satisfied her quite. Reached the city at midnight.

25th. We passed about two weeks in New York in an uncertainty about sailing, and without amusing ourselves to any great extent. Oscar thinks it is a great den of swindlers, and I have only to follow his opinion. We visited the park, of course, and went several times to hear Theo. Thomas' Orchestra. How I *did* enjoy it! It has been my chief pleasure in New York. I have heard the "Bulls and Bears" of Wall St. bellowing and grunting in the Stock and Gold Boards—proceedings which interested me very much, though I was to some extent incapable of understanding their purpose. N. York has been dull, dull! And I am glad that today we sail. Although so late in the season we have succeeded in securing a good cabin on the German vessel the "Rhein" and now I can only hope that we will have a fortunate passage and no sea sickness.

July 6th On Board. Already the 6th of July and we will not reach Bremen till tomorrow. How agreeable our passage has been! no sickness whatever and the sea has been as a lake. It is indeed a great pleasure to be on the ocean when one feels well and comfortable. Day before yesterday a faint effort was made to celebrate our national festival, but I am forced to admit that enthusiasm was wanting. The Dutch band scraped out "Hail Columbia" and a few other martial strains, whilst we were occupied in dining, and some, more patriotic than their companions, laid aside knife and fork to give vent to a feeble "Bravo," after which order was restored. Yesterday we bade good-by to some of our fellow passengers at Southampton, who thought they had been long enough on the "briny deep," but they have missed the most beautiful part of the trip, for tonight we are on the North Sea. I had studied at school about the atmosphere of these northern regions but I had not till now realized what it meant. At ten o'clock it was still twilight, and a clear twilight. The moon is out again, full and round like in Philadelphia, but how many thousands of miles closer it looks! It seems so immense too, and the stars appear so huge that one can scarcely imagine them so very, *very* far off. No more sick complaining people; every one is gay and happy with the prospect of reaching land tomorrow, and with this calm sea, and this magnificent sky, it seemed sinful to leave the deck. But—tomorrow—Terra Firma!

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[2] The amazing careers of the Claflin Sisters, Tennessee and Victoria, have been told by Emanie Sachs in her book *The Terrible Siren,* New York, 1928.

7th Bremen. " The free and independent city of Bremen " as the Germans style it, because, from what I can understand, it is subject to no particular power. Well, this " free and independent city " pleases me immensely; the private residences are the most exquisite little gems, and the people all look so amiable and happy. On landing this morning at Bremen Harbor we had to wait an hour for the train to bring us to Bremen, and en route, the only things we noticed remarkable were, that the houses were all thatched and the cows all black. We have stopped at the Hillman Hotel, a very lovely house, in company with Mr. & Mrs. Griesinger from New Orleans, whose society we will have, I presume all through Germany. Together with some gentlemen acquaintances—natives of Bremen—we visited the Summer Theatre, a nice little place, where we heard a famous comedienne of Vienna—Knack; and afterwards finished the evening in the notorious " Rathskeller " the most celebrated wine cellar in the world. I cannot say that " the most celebrated wine cellar in the world " is the loveliest of places, but you know " handsome is as handsome does " and this *does* very well indeed for such as own a partiality for wine. Rath-haus means Council House and the Rathskeller is the cellar of the ancient Council House. It is underground, and on entering one is almost stifled by the fumes of wine and the hazy atmosphere of the place. Before seating ourselves for supper we took a look at the great casks of Rhine wine, each of which is named, and most of which have each an apartment to itself. Twelve which contain the oldest and best wine are called the " Twelve Apostles "; one huge cask is dedicated to Bacchus; and separated from the others is one, which together with the room in which it stands, bears the name of " The Rose." On the ceiling of the apartment is painted an immense rose, with underneath a latin inscription; and we were told that in this chamber were held the secret meetings of the ancient rulers of Bremen; hence comes the expression "Sub Rosa," "Under the Rose."

8th Have passed another pleasant day—morning devoted to shop seeing and shopping. This afternoon in company with the G's, Mr. Bechtel, and Mr. Brantlet, we went ten miles out in the country to visit the residence of a Mr. Knoop, the wealthiest merchant of Bremen. Although not yet completed it is the princeliest private residence that I have ever seen—a miracle of costliness and exquisite taste. We took tea, a regular *German* tea, in the *loveliest* spot, in a sort of bower-nook, summer retreat—I know not what to call it—and all grew merry on cheese and fresh milk. I am tired tonight and will sleep well.

9th. Oscar and I started out alone this morning, and following the direction of our Guide Book, gracefully wended our way towards the Cathedral, an old edifice founded by Charlemagne in 800—now a Protestant temple. The chief interesting object was the Blei Keller—Lead cellar—which possesses the power of preserving bodies from total decay. In order to convince us that there was no hoax in the story an old woman—fit keeper for such treasures, displayed to us several dried up remains—ghastly old things that would have been infinitely more discreet in crumbling away hundreds of years ago. Tonight we leave for Cologne. Bremen being my first European city I cannot compare it. I think it a lovely place however—the private houses especially struck me as being exquisite—so white, so neat and so ornamented with flowers. The people are exceedingly polite and obliging.

10th. We left Bremen last night by the 10 o'clock train and were fortunate enough—Mr. & Mrs. G. and ourselves to get a coupe all to ourselves; it is needless to mention that a few thalers went a great way towards assisting us. Travelled till 12 and had to wait two hours for a connection. Is there any greater agony than waiting for a connection in the middle of the night? I know of none and prefer passing over those two hours in silence. A sleepless night of course, and reached Cologne only at 8 o'clock this morning. We have come to the Hotel Du Nord, a very lovely house. The first thing we did was to take a good bath and then march over to the Cathedral, its being Sunday, where we heard an eleven o'clock Mass. I found it extremely odd that the people would sing during service and seem to sing with great taste and keep very good time. We will not visit the Cathedral regularly till tomorrow. Dear me! What a hot scorching day it has been, and what wild unheard of things we do in travelling that at home we would shudder to think of. At three o'clock, under a broiling sun, we (the quartette) got on a Rhine boat and went a mile down the river to visit the Zoological Garden. I hate Zoological Gardens of a hot Sunday afternoon. . . . There was plenty of music, lots of it, and such a marvelous number of girls in white waists and variegated skirts, who seemed to be casting longing glances towards a certain house—enclosure—whatever one might call it, which I afterwards learned was set aside every Sunday evening for the pious purpose of dancing. At sunset we tore ourselves away, not from the animals, from the scene; and after a repetition of the crushing on the boat, we reached our hotel in comparative safety. Lina and her husband have left us; we will meet them again in Bonn.

11th Well! We have visited the Cathedral. I do not know much about architecture but I have sufficient taste to *feel* that it is a marvelous conception and exquisite piece of work; it is still incomplete and they say it will not be finished for years. Whilst strolling through one of the Passages this morning, whom should we come suddenly upon but Bunnie Knapp. To say he was surprised to see us would be using a very feeble term—he was astounded. Tomorrow we meet him again in Bonn, where he is following a course of lectures. I find nothing particularly attractive in Cologne: of course we have invested in sundry bottles of its famous water. This evening we went to the Bellevue Garden on the river and were caught in a drenching rain for our pains. Tomorrow we bid farewell to the city with its narrow ugly streets, and pass on.

BONN

12th. We left Cologne this morning at 8 o'clock by a Rhine boat. Saw no particularly nice scenery and reached Bonn at 11. We have stopped at the Kley Hotel which possesses the advantage of having a very fine garden leading down to the river. I slept away half the day and arose at six to go out for a drive. How I did enjoy it! The afternoon was lovely—the country was lovely and indeed everything was charming. Our driver rejoiced in a very amiable disposition, and endeavored to explain all the objects of interest which we encountered; we understood one half of his communications and guessed at the other. The house in which the great Beethoven was born was pointed out to us and resembled very much all the other houses in the neighborhood. Bonn is very nice; and it is very late; and I am very sleepy. Wrote to mother tonight.

13th. How like a dream this whole day has been! Let me think for a moment. As usual we arose very late this morning, and after enjoying a good breakfast, started out for a stroll. We took into our heads that we should like to visit the University; and after gazing up at all the windows, and knocking ineffectually at several doors we came upon an amiable sprightly woman who spoke French and offered to " show us around." We saw nothing remarkably interesting—only a mass of copies from famous pieces of sculpture. The good dame would not take us through the hall in which the students were gathered, " for," she said, " the young gentlemen are not sorry when a young lady passes through their room." I ventured to suggest that my being married might in a manner abate the interest with which they might otherwise regard me; but my argument proved weak, and failed utterly.

We met Bunnie again, whom we encountered diligently occupied in playing cards in a " Bier Halle," and upon seeing us he came forward and insisted upon our giving him the rest of the day. We delivered ourselves into his hands and were not sorry to have been so pleasantly captured. We took the 3 o'clock train and went about half an hour's ride up the Rhine to obtain one of the finest views on the river. It was indeed lovely! The Drachenfels—black and bold in relief against the sky; below it and nearer us the island of Nonnenwerth, half buried in the Rhine waters, with Rollensecke keeping guard in the distance. The legend attached to the spot is romantic, and I have no doubt perfectly true. It is related that during the first Crusade, Rollen, a brave and generous youth, fired with bold enthusiasm, took himself off to fight in the good cause, leaving behind him disconsolate friends and a weeping sweetheart. Time went on, and in an evil hour a report reached the quiet neighborhood that Rollen had met his death in Palestine. Fancy the wild grief of the maiden! In her utter despair she fled from friends and family and entered the convent still to be seen on the island of Nonnenwerth, intending there to bear with her grief, and in the course of human events, to die. But listen! On a warm summer's day a solitary horseman entered the small town which has since been demolished, and the lone traveller was none other than Rollen. He hastens to the home of his beloved filled with expectant happiness. He enters. "Where is Gretchen?" he cries. "Mein Gott, we thought you were dead—she has gone to the convent." Grief and rage mingle in the bosom of the hero to render the scene terrible. Moved by contending emotions, he flies to the top of a distant mountain and builds himself the castle of Rollensecke, from the windows of which he watches the convent night and day, catching occasional glimpses of a form which he loved alas! too well. Thus ended his life—a wreck—the fruits of a false report.

We stopped at a very attractive and nicely situated house, commanding a lovely view of surrounding objects and with the people of which B. seemed to be very familiar. He speaks German astonishingly well. We were treated with a delightful beverage composed of Rhine wine and strawberries and known as "Endebeeren-Boule." At 5 o'clock we took the train returning to Bonn and arrived here to find Mr. and Mrs. G. awaiting us in the Garden; so there we were a nice little party at once, and knowing that our companionship was to be of short duration, we made excellent good use of our time. There was a concert in the Garden which of course we attended but did not pay much attention to. What quantities of that maddening Rhine wine I have drunk today! The music—the scenery—the bright waters—the wine—have made me exceedingly gay. In fact we all gave play to our spirits more or less, and I fear these phlegmatic Germans will consider our American sociability as somewhat too loud. During the tableaux which followed the concert there was a little encounter between a citizen and a student; brought about by some fancied slight on the part of the citizen. Bunnie fears it will end in a duel, which he tells me are of frequent occurrence.

Dear me! I feel like smoking a cigarette—think I will satisfy my desire and open that sweet little box which I bought in Bremen. Oscar has gone to some Halle to witness these Germans' interpretation of a galop and waltz, etc. Tomorrow we take the boat far up the Rhine—perhaps B. will accompany us. I must not forget to note that we travelled on the same train this afternoon with the Queen of Prussia who was going to attend a concert in Rollensburg. I am enchanted with Bonn, and sincerely hope I have not —*Here the Diary breaks off abruptly.*

14th. "The Rhine! The Rhine! A blessing on the Rhine" so says Longfellow & so say I. It seems like an exquisite panorama—and as I close my eyes, and pass again in fancy Drockenfeld, Godesberg and the Rollensecke, shall I ever forget the beauties of the beautiful Rhine! The gray and stately ruins—the churches peeping out of the dense foliage and those vineyards sloping to the water's edge.

WIESBADEN

15th. We left Mayence this afternoon and arrived in Wiesbaden. What an unpleasant souvenir I retain of Mayence. Let it dwell only in my memory, and I trust even there, not too long. We strolled into the Cursaal tonight and watched intently the gambling. It is all as I have pictured. The sang froid of the croupier—the eager, greedy, and in some instances, fiendish look upon the faces of the players. I was tempted to put down a silver piece myself—but had not the courage.

16th. Walked about town rather listlessly today. In the morning went to the boiling springs, tasted the water and thought it shocking. Oscar of course found it delicious. Dined at 6 and afterwards went to the Opera to hear the incomparable Wachtel in Wm. Tell. How I could and how I would have enjoyed it, had I felt better, but have been feeling badly all day. Tomorrow en route for Frankfurt.

17th. What an uproar! What an excitement! I do not see how we got out of Wiesbaden alive. News reached us last night of the declaration of war between France and Prussia. This morning all the hotels emptied their human contents into the various depots. French women with their maids, their few children, their laces and velvets hastening to get started on their homeward journey—every other nationality equally anxious to get back to their respective domiciles. The depot from whence we took the train for Frankfurt presented a scene of fashionable excitement, that I shall never forget. We reached Frankfurt at 10 o'clock. I was struck on the way by the familiarity of an otherwise very refined German lady, with her maid. They seemed more like sisters than mistress and maid. Remained in F. only four hours. Took a good dinner and then started out to see the objects of interest. It seems to be the city of statues. Gutenberg is remembered in a magnificent representation, nor are Goethe and Schiller forgotten. We visited the house where the founder of the great family of Rothschilds was born. It is in the Jewish quarters and looks shabby. A much better edifice is the house in which Goethe was born—it is kept in repair by the people. The house from which Luther addressed the people is held in great reverence. Left at 7½ and reached Heidelberg after 11. Have taken rooms at the Victoria Hotel.

HEIDELBERG

18th. Arose at 12 this morning, breakfasted & started out on foot for the Schloss. It was rather hard at first with our rather imperfect knowledge of German to get into the right path; but that point secured, we started off like true mountaineers. I have thought and talked a great deal of Heidelberg, and for once in my life have not been disappointed by the real versus the ideal. It is a magnificent old ruin: the scenery surrounding it being well worth walking miles to see. And what a glorious day! And glorious to walk to the very top of the Berg where we dined with hungry appetites on eel and necker wine, enjoying at the same time, the exquisite view through the soft summer landscape.

How unfortunate is this war! We cannot go as was our intention to Baden and it is even probable we may not visit France. That would indeed be deplorable; for what is Europe outside of Paris? So say tourists. Tomorrow we see a little more of Heidelberg, then leave for Stuttgart, where, heaven be praised, our tents shall be pitched for a breathing space.

July 19th. Strolled about town all morning making a few purchases of books and music and left the hotel at 4, having some difficulty in securing comfortable railway accommodations, owing to the large number of soldiers in movement. Passed through a lovely country, picturesque in the extreme and reached Stuttgart at 10 p. m. Have come to the Marquart Hotel.

20th. Rose late—feeling not well and staggered at the amount of unpacking and washing to be given out; which interesting occupation engaged my time till the afternoon. Dined at a restaurant—took a cab and visited Herman where we met the Griesingers; came back about 10—read and went to bed late after an uneventful day.

21st. Have done nothing but lounge—took a ride in the afternoon and retired early.

22nd. Went out this morning with Lina G. and her mother-in-law, who speaking neither French nor English, does not converse much with me unless when Lina acts as interpreter. A delightful lady. Bought a black lace shawl—some Brussels and Valenciennes lace—table and bed linen, etc. in anticipation of that housekeeping which awaits me on the " other side." Do not like Stuttgart. " The reason why I cannot tell " but the blame must rest with me and not with the no doubt charming city.

There is such movement—especially about the hotel—such an influx of troops. I met the commander in chief Von Moltke face to face on the stairway. What an iron countenance! The French I fancy will meet their equal when they encounter the rugged old general and his troops.

ULM

27th. Left Stuttgart this morning—arrived at Ulm in two hours time having barely time to dine and visit the handsome cathedral and fine fortifications, and left for Friedrichschafen which we reached late at night. Took lodgings for a night's rest, and started early in the morning for Constanz. We are anxious to get into Switzerland.

28th. Took the boat at 10 this morning—day cloudy—but I was glad we had no sun. The " blue lake of Constanz " looked bluer than ever through the mist. Just as we were starting out a child who was playing near the boat fell in the water; we had not time to wait to see if he was rescued, but I fear not as he must have been caught in some of the numerous net work of wooden piles. The scenery was exquisite along the shore and the hours glided away only too fast.

AT CONSTANZ

We set out immediately to " see the town," taking in the beautiful church of St. Stephen which belongs to the severe Gothic order; saw some beautiful paintings not the less lovely for being new and then went to the Cathedral—ascending some 50,000 steps (more or less) to reach the tower, but were repaid for our fatigue by the view. I should fancy such scenery—such a beautiful side of nature, would influence these people only for good deeds. Left Constanz at 4½, reaching Schaffhausen at 7.

SCHAFFHAUSEN

The Bluebein Hotel where we have taken quarters seems to be entirely at our disposal: the war having frightened off all visitors. I trust the landlord will not attempt to make his accounts balance at our expense. We command a charming view of the Rhein Falls (the largest in Europe) and will remain here some time, if only our impatient spirits permit.

29th. Rain! all the day rain, so we could not venture out, and have amused ourselves all day making mental photographs of the falls.

30th. Still cloudy and raining, so we did little more than lounge. The landlord has transferred us bag and baggage to the small hotel adjoining which we like infinitely better, having gained a large room by the exchange.

31st. Sunday! Intended to go to church—but what is it they say of the paving stones of the lower realm? Did not rise till ten and the church is three quarters of an hour from here. As the morning looked bright Oscar and I started out to make our long delayed personal acquaintance with the environs. A precipitous path leads down to the falls which we had no difficulty in *descending;* looked into the mysteries of a camera obscura which graces the shore, drank some "bier" to the delicious accompaniment of a zither, and seeing clouds gathering, started for home. Talk of the flood gates of Heaven! I think Heaven and Hell were combined to our discomfiture. Never had I felt such rain with a sprinkling of hail. We scrambled as best we could up the slippery path which a moment before had seemed so idyllic—drenched to the skin. My gabardine I fear is ruined. The remainder of the day I devoted to the perusal of Dickens.

August 1st. Everything stupidly quiet *à l'ordinaire.* No one remains in our hotel save two families. Nearly all the domestics are being discharged. There is a Russian family consisting of husband and wife and little boy, to whom we have taken a great fancy. The lady is a lovely blonde, full of spirits and speaks charming French: what linguists are the Russians! The husband seems delicate and the boy very pleased with us; he calls me *die schöne Dame* not being able to master the intricacies of Chopin. A long walk to Schaffhausen, and retired early.

2nd. A walk after dinner is about the only distraction. A beautiful afternoon, so we went again to Schaffhausen, about ¾ of an hour from here, returning at 9 o'clock in the hotel stage, which returns, always empty.

3rd. Day cloudy, much rain—could not go out—it is impossible to venture out here when it rains—the walking is something execrable. Must mention a good anecdote Mrs. Kendensky related at dinner.

"Il y avait un jeune homme qui était fort amoureux d'une jeune fille, mais il était si timide et bête qu'il ne savait ce qu'il lui fallait. Il avait un ami intime que était aussi son confident. Il le chercha un jour et lui dit. 'Ah mon ami, aide-moi, dite-moi ce que je puis dire à Mlle. Tu connais ma passion, qui est d'un tel caractère, que dans sa présence, je ne parle plus!' 'Ah bah! qu'est-ce que cela fait—dis-lui n'importe quoi.' 'Mais, aide-moi d'abord!' 'Eh, bien, à quelle heure vas-tu généralement la voir?' 'Le soir.' Alors quand elle t'offrira du thé, dis-lui: 'Mademoiselle, vous êtes comme cette tasse, pleine de bontée (bon thé).' A la bonne heure la pauvre bête était joyeuse. Malhereusement la prochaine fois qu'il alla voir sa belle c'était le matin, et elle lui offrait du café—ne voilà pas que le stupide dit de haute voix: 'Mlle vous êtes comme cette tasse.' 'Comment!' répondit-elle avec étonnement. 'Vous êtes pleine de bon café!'"

9th. Nothing now claims the attention but war news. We learned today of the defeat, on every side, of the French. The Prussians have retaken Saarbrück—defeated the enemy at Wissenburg. McMahon has suffered a severe defeat—, and we hear that Paris is in revolution. We place no reliance on the last intelligence. We leave the Rhein pale tomorrow for Lucerne. Two weeks have we rested here quietly—no excitement, such as caused by the imperfect "rumors of war" which reach us now and again. Yesterday we crossed the bridge and visited Lauffen Castle from whence the finest views of the Falls are obtained. So closely did we approach them that the spray fell upon us like rain—such a delicious, indescribable feeling of moistness. Yesterday our friends the Kendenskys bade us "auf Wiedersehen." We meet at Lucerne. Rec. a letter from Lil Chouteau today, written on the 29th of June.

Aug. 10th. Have not yet left the Falls. The weather was so inclement yesterday that we could not leave, and today the rain is pouring in torrents. I wish to leave at all events on the 2.30 train. It is 10 o'clock and Oscar is still asleep. I woke him a moment ago and said something about going—but he turned over mumbling " weather too bad—go tomorrow." Up at last, changed his mind—thinks we will go. Impossible to get news of the war. I fancy the Germans must have suffered somewhat; when the French are defeated we are always sure to hear of it. Tonight we sleep at Zurich " On the banks of the blue Zurich's waters." Blue enough I fancy, this dull day.

What reluctance I feel in leaving the Rhein—so green and beautiful! probably never to see it again. But our stay in Europe is so limited we can not give longer than two weeks even to such idyllic a spot as the " Rhein Fall."

11th. Reached Zurich at half past four after a two hours' ride by rail: which would have been more agreeable had the weather been so. Came to the " Baur au Lac " which cannot be recommended on the score of economy. I have yet seen no more beautiful situation than that possessed by Zurich. The white houses gleaming on the hills—the mountains surrounding the landscape like a frame work—and more than all—the clear green waters like a mirror reflecting back the hills—the trees that surround it. We went in the evening to the Ton Halle to hear some music, which was only tolerable.

12th. Awoke this morning to find a disagreeable rain falling, which had stopped however when we finished our 10 o'clock breakfast. The sun came out brilliantly and we ventured a row on the lake. I find myself handling the oars quite like an expert. Oscar took a nap in the afternoon and I took a walk alone. How very far I *did* go. Visited a panorama which showed the Rigi Kulen in all its grandeur—the only audience being myself and *two* soldiers. I wonder what people thought of me—a young woman strolling about alone. I even took a glass of beer at a friendly little beer garden quite on the edge of the lake: and amused myself for some time feeding the importunate little fish who came up to the surface as tame as chickens to receive their crumbs.

No news of the war. Left Zurich at half past seven by boat on the lake for Mayence where I am now preparing to retire. Admired very much the scenery on the lake and the lights of the town in the distance that seemed to touch the water's edge. We leave in the morning by 7 o'clock stage for Zug.

13th. Started at seven o'clock this morning only half awake from Hugan. Got into a delightful little stage, with no one but a delightful old lady, who did not in the least object to smoking—on the contrary, rather liked it, and gave us to understand that she indulged herself in an occasional weed.

The drive from Hugan to Zug was charming in the early fresh morning. At Zug we breakfasted, and took the boat at half past seven for Guda. Met a party of Americans—gent and wife, two young men and a German, the last of whom was very nice, the rest perfect Yankees.

At 3 commenced the ascent of the Rigi: the lady, her husband, the German and myself on horse back. My husband and the two others walking. What views we had coming up the mountain! Can there be anything finer in Switzerland! Reached the summit at 6, but too cloudy to see much. Had one of my fearful headaches, which took me directly to bed—knowing that sleep alone would come to my relief.

14th. The blowing of the horn awoke us at 4 this morning, and dressing in haste we started out—a set of shivering, half awakened mortals—and half clad, to see the sight of sights! We had been favored—I might almost say blessed, with a grand morning. Standing on the summit of the Rigi we see this mass of white soft floating clouds, and the snow covered mountains, rearing their heads above. Grim Pilatus with his rugged top looking blacker amid the clouds, and the sun just tipping with red the white mountains.

Started down at 8 for Russnach—pretty much in fog—breakfasted and took a hack for Lucerne.

En route visited Tell's chapel: the spot where Tell is said to have killed Gessler. Hot ride—reached Lucerne at 3. Have taken rooms at the Kelbe Veen—and parted with our Yankee acquaintances. Oscar is very tired from his walk up and down the mountain.

15th. The "Fête de l'Empereur" but very little celebration will there be I fancy in Paris. We all presume a great battle has been fought today—but whether the Prussians or French were victorious, there is no telling. It is also the feast of the Assumption, which fact I discovered when it was too late to attend Mass. Went in the afternoon to see the famous Lion, with our Russian friends who have again turned up. It impressed me as a grand piece of art. Took a row on the lake—and handled the oars with marked improvement. Indulged in ices which are far from approaching our home ices—and came back to the hotel feeling decidedly tired. Mrs. K. told an anecdote of an old priest who made such an impressive sermon to his congregation of the sufferings of Christ, as to excite them all to tears. Seeing the affliction into which he had thrown his good people he exclaimed: "Do not thus cry my good children, for after all, it may not be true." Received a letter from Nina today. Nothing unusual has occurred since our absence.

16th. Went down with our Yankee acquaintances, whom we leave today. Heard the great organ play beautiful music. Wonderful imitation of the human voice—and a storm. Took a row on the lake! our last on the beautiful lake of Lucerne. Tomorrow we leave early, in a coach with the Kendenskys for Brienz, where I suppose we part. Oscar has gone out to gather some war news.

INTERLAKEN

17th. All day in a coach and four, travelling through this beautiful country. During the morning along the lake of Lucerne and in the afternoon through the valley of the Are and along the lake of Brienz until Interlaken.

18th. Spent the morning in looking into the pretty shops, which seem to be filled with curious wood carving. The afternoon was passed in contemplating the rain fall, and gazing through the mist at the Jungfrau. Wrote to Nina.

19th. Rain still falling, so Oscar went out alone this morning, and returned with very sad news of the war. Never have the French armies suffered such repeated mortifications. Saarbrück, —Wirth—Metz—Wissenburg—have followed in quick and inglorious succession. Took leave of the Kendenskys at 5 o'clock, and started for the boat. Passed an agreeable hour on the lake of Thun, from which many glaciers are visible. Reached Berne at 9 o'clock. Have a pleasant room at the Hotel Boulevard, but will leave tomorrow.

FRIBOURG

20th. Have passed the day in visiting objects interesting and otherwise of Berne. It is the largest city in Switzerland, and is beside so quaint and old, and has so perfectly retained its ancient manners and customs. It may be called, essentially, the city of

Bears, deriving its name from the animal. We of course looked into the bears' cave, enjoying their curious antics for a moment—strolled leisurely through the quaint streets: and at 8 o'clock found ourselves in Fribourg, where at last! " on parle le français." What a rest it will be! Not that we ever *succeeded* in talking German; but what excruciating efforts have we not made. How short the distance seems to us here, from one city to another, in comparison with those interminable miles and miles of night and day travelling in America.

OUCHY

21st. Attended mass this morning at the cathedral of Fribourg, where we heard, what is considered, the finest organ in the world. Left at noon, and it has taken but three hours to reach Ouchy. We are installed at the beautiful hotel of the Beau Mirage. Americans seem to have bodily possession. Amongst others we chanced across the Hoyles this afternoon. Mrs. Hoyle, Ella and Charlie, whom we tried to induce or to inveigle into a row on the lake, but Sunday taken into connection with some rather menacing looking waves, was enough to deter them. I did not believe that Switzerland had anything so enchanting in reserve for us, as the lake of Geneva. How indescribably lovely it was this morning—22nd—as we glided over its blue waters! Saw in the distance the castle of Chillon—and gave a tender thought to Byron, en passant. Will go to Chamounix tomorrow. What a dull place is this Martigny.

ARGENTIÈRE

23rd. Although the middle of August, I am sitting at a country hotel, before a blazing wood fire, trying to thaw my frozen corporosity. We left Martigny this morning at 6 o'clock on horse back, with a guide enroute for Chamounix. All went well until about 2 o'clock we had passed the mauvais pas, and the Tête Noir (where the sun was never known to shine) and were far from the shelter of a hotel, when the rain commenced to fall in torrents. A peasant hut, presenting itself on the way, we did not hesitate to enter; nor was I sorry of having done so; the place and people forming quite an interesting study to me. Oscar conversed with them freely. The family consisted of the old man aged 82 years —the old grandfather, who had never in his life been farther than Geneva, a distance of 9 miles: the father, a handsome man, mother and four daughters, the eldest but fourteen. What surprised me was that in a cabin where there was barely a chair to sit on, the eldest girl was going to school (in winter only when she did not work) and showed us her exercises which were written correctly, and in one of the most beautiful hands I have ever seen. I really believe, it is to the thrift and intelligence of her home classes, that France owes her greatness, and even should she suffer defeat, it is mainly that quality of endurance and pride in her people that will enable her to arise again. These peasants were Catholics, the only ornaments in their house being holy pictures. Oscar presented the delighted children with small coin. And when about to leave, the mother called them all to look and feel of my dress (an old black silk) something they had never seen before. We continued our journey, hoping the rain would cease or moderate, but it poured on in torrents—and such a cold rain. Oscar's southern blood felt it more keenly than I, and he would alternately walk in hopes of stirring up a little warmth. We arrived an hour ago—with hands and feet almost frozen—and our persons beautifully festooned with icicles. In the morning we continued our way to Chamounix. An appeal has just been received from headquarters, calling on all men capable of bearing arms, to try to save France. Vain appeal, I fear.

CHAMOUNIX

24th. Kitty Garesché's birthday. I had not forgotten her. We left Argentière this morning at 7 in a sort of a little barouche, driven by rather an amiable specimen of the genus homo. It was a beautiful morning—so cold and bracing. We drove to the mer de glace and ventured into a glittering fairy-like cavern which has only recently been dug under the "mer." Were pointed out the place where Mrs. Mark and her guide perished not long since in ascending Mount Blanc. On the way to Chamounix met Mr. & Mrs. Knapp and Miss Harrison in a carriage en route to Martigny. Bunnie, Miss Belsonver and Andy had gone on ahead on mules, so we missed them; being at the mer de glace when they passed. Oscar and I took a modest tramp up the mountain of the Glacier de Bosson—not *on* the Glacier—no thank you! Enjoyed the descent—going up was too warm. Were obliged to sleep at Chamounix tonight having missed the stage this morning. Leave tomorrow at seven for Geneva.

GENEVA

25th. Left Chamounix this morning at seven and travelled through a beautiful mountainous country in a lumbering old coach and six, which had every appearance of being a relic of the days of Louis XIV. Reached Geneva at 2. What a beautiful city. The loveliest we have visited yet. Face burned again—great nuisance.

NEUCHÂTEL

26th. We have taken our usual desultory stroll through the streets of Geneva—admiring the glittering white houses, indulging in an occasional purchase. Amongst other things, bought a cute diminutive watch. We left Geneva at 1½ and only reached Neuchâtel at 11. Have taken our last view of the Alps at Lausane. How grand they were in the deepening twilight. It is very hard to get to Paris: tomorrow let us hope we start.

PARIS

Sunday, Sept. 4th, 1870. What an eventful day for France, may I not say the world? And that I should be here in the midst of it. This morning my husband and myself rose at about eleven and after taking our coffee, started off in the direction of the Madeleine for Mass. Very sad and very important news had reached Paris during the previous night, from the seat of war. The Emperor was prisoner in the hands of the Prussians—McMahon either wounded or dead, and forty thousand armed men had surrendered! What did it mean? The people on the streets looked sad and preoccupied. It was now nearly one and we entered church where Mass had not yet commenced. It was also the hour when the Corps Législatif was going to meet to decide on an important affair of state, and already there were determined looking people marching towards the Chamber. The short Mass was soon over. We hastened out and stationed ourselves on the church steps, from which position we commanded a splendid view of the entire length of the street up to the chamber of the Corps Législatif. There were thousands of people forming one great human mass. In the chamber was an all important question being decided, and without, was an impatient populace waiting to learn the result. Scarcely an hour passed, when down they came, when down they came, the whole great body, and at once it seemed to pass like an electric flash from one end of Paris to the other—the cry " Vive la République ! "

I have seen a French Revolution! and astonishing—no drop of blood has been shed—unless I take into account the blood that has paid sad tribute to the Prussian.

The Gendarmes have been dispersed, and the Garde Nationale has taken under its care the public buildings and places of the city. Oscar has gone tonight on the Boulevards, where men, women and children are shouting the Marseillaise with an abandon and recklessness purely *French.* Now, whilst I write, comes to me that strain from the martial air " Aux Armes, Citoyens! Formons nos Batallions!"

If now they will form their batallions against the Prussian and cease their cry of " A bas l'Empereur."

All day they have been tearing down and casting in the dust the Imperial eagles that have spread their wings so proudly over Paris. It cannot but make one sad. We have seen the rude populace running and shouting through the private grounds of the Tuileries; places that 24 hours ago were looked upon as almost sacred ground. What a nation.

Our stay in Paris was short and of course offered none of those attractions—fascinations—usually held out to visitors. We left on the 10th of September and proceeded to Brest, from which point we took the steamer " Ville de Paris " for New York, where we arrived after a very stormy and threatening passage; nor did we tarry on our way to St. Louis—where once again I have embraced those dear ones left behind.

The *S. S. Ville de Paris* arrived in New York September 21, 1870.

Chapter VI

THE NEW ORLEANS DECADE

1870–1880

AFTER the honeymoon tour of Europe, pleasant and exciting as it was, the satisfaction of being in her own home in New Orleans was a distinct delight to the young wife. The first impressions of her visit to New Orleans the year before had been expressed in this artless but enthusiastic phrase: "so clean, so white and green."

This first impression remained. It was remembered years later to describe Edna Pontellier's home in *The Awakening.* Kate Chopin's first New Orleans residence was on Magazine Street, No. 443, in the old system of house numbers. Today a dilapidated district, Magazine Street in 1870 was a charming residential section. What is written in *The Awakening* to describe Edna Pontellier's home is a picture of Kate Chopin's own home in New Orleans:

> It was a large, double cottage with a broad front verandah whose round fluted columns supported the sloping roof. The house was painted a dazzling white; the outside shutters, or jalousies, were green.[1]

The young wife experienced a personal freedom never before realized, as she daily supervised the leisurely routine of her own home. For the first time in her life she was away from a household crowded with femininity. Servants were plentiful, and they were faithful. If they were deliberate, it was hard to complain when they worked for the meager wages of that era.

Society, represented by Oscar's Creole relatives and acquaintances, put forth its demands, though she shunned as far as possible most of its formal claims. Apart from the few rigorous social duties that could not be avoided, the young wife lived an attractive and glamorous existence designed to the tastes of her own choice. Her gay insouciance was not, however, without its dash of seriousness. The inevitable weekly reception day—everyone of importance had a Day—was a social nicety not to be disregarded. In *The Awakening,* with a touch of mild asperity, Kate Chopin put her remembrance of these days in the account of Edna's Tuesday afternoons:

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[1] *The Awakening,* 1906 ed., p. 127.

> On Tuesday afternoons—Tuesday being Mrs. Pontellier's reception day—there was a constant stream of callers—women who came in carriages or in the street cars, or walked when the air was soft and distance permitted. A light-colored mulatto boy, in dress coat and bearing a diminutive silver tray for the reception of cards, admitted them. A maid, in white fluted cap, offered the callers liqueur, coffee or chocolate, as they might desire. Mrs. Pontellier, attired in a handsome reception gown, remained in the drawing room the entire afternoon receiving her visitors. Men sometimes called in the evening with their wives.[2]

Edna rebels at the inexorable demand. She found the Day tiresome and onerous. Her husband is thoroughly irritated. There is some humor in Kate Chopin's account, because at times perhaps she would have liked to escape as Edna did.

> [Pontellier and Edna] seated themselves at table one Tuesday evening, a few weeks after their return from Grand Isle. They were alone together. The boys were being put to bed; the patter of their bare, escaping feet could be heard occasionally, as well as the pursuing voice of the quadroon, lifted in mild protest and entreaty. Mrs. Pontellier did not wear her usual Tuesday reception gown; she was in ordinary house dress. Mr. Pontellier, who was observant about such things, noticed it, as he served the soup and handed it to the boy in waiting.
>
> "Tired out, Edna? Whom did you have? Many callers?" he asked. He tasted his soup and began to season it with pepper, salt, vinegar, mustard—everything within reach. "There were

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[2] *The Awakening,* p. 128.

> a good many," replied Edna, who was eating her soup with evident satisfaction. "I found their cards when I got home; I was out."
>
> "Out!" exclaimed her husband, with something like genuine consternation in his voice as he laid down the vinegar cruet and looked at her through his glasses.
>
> "Why, what could have taken you out on Tuesday? What did you have to do?"
>
> "Nothing. I simply felt like going out, and I went out."
>
> "Well, I hope you left some suitable excuse," said her husband, somewhat appeased, as he added a dash of cayenne pepper to the soup."
>
> "No, I left no excuse. I told Joe to say I was out, that was all."
>
> "Why, my dear, I should think you'd understand by this time that people don't do such things; we've got to observe *les convenances* if we ever expect to go on and keep up with the procession. If you felt that you had to leave home this afternoon, you should have left some suitable explanation for your absence."

Had Kate Chopin broken a social convention in this way, Oscar would not have reproached her. With the memory of the unnecessary hardships and sufferings of his mother's life vivid in his mind, Oscar allowed his wife a degree of freedom and a gratification of whim that was displeasing to many of his Creole relatives. The brief indication of the conjugal understanding of the Ratignolles—important characters in *The Awakening*—actually describes Oscar and his young wife:

> The Ratignolles understood each other perfectly. If ever the fusion of two human beings into one had been accomplished on this sphere it was surely in their union.[3]

Oscar Chopin's relatives did not understand that he understood his wife. Some of these relatives shook their heads in wonder or sternly advised him about his duty. To them Katherine was merely a girl of nineteen. To allow her to go on, always in her own way, was more than unusual, it was horrible. All of this indignation, expressed or suppressed, gave Oscar and Kate genial occasions of merriment. Kate had a fatal gift of mimicry that was not unemployed when Oscar told of a new outburst of advice. A summing up, as it were, of the prejudices met in these New Orleans years may be found in her short story "A Matter of Prejudice." There is grim humor in the depiction of Madame Carambeau.

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[3] *The Awakening*, p. 144.

> She was straight and slender. Her hair was white, and she wore it in puffs on the temples. Her skin was fair and her eyes blue and cold.
>
> She had not spoken to her son Henri for ten years because he had married an American girl. She would not permit green tea to be introduced into her house, and those who could not or would not drink coffee might drink tisane of *fleur de Laurier* for all she cared.
>
> For old Madame Carambeau was a woman of many prejudices—so many, in fact, that it would be difficult to name them all. She detested dogs, cats, organ-grinders, white servants and children's noises. She despised Americans, Germans and all people of a different faith from her own. *Anything not French had, in her opinion, little right to existence.* . . . She had an original theory that the Irish voice is distressing to the sick.[4]

Prejudices and indignations could flutter about her; Kate Chopin was not to be thwarted by them.

Those who knew Kate Chopin in New Orleans at this time and remember her now—few, indeed, they are—recall an exaltation that showed in her bearing. With her intimate friends, and to the hilarious delight of Oscar, she occasionally demonstrated her power of mimicry that perfectly simulated the manners, actions, and tones of voices of anyone who attracted her insatiable curiosity. Her power of vocal mimicry in particular is said to have been surprisingly accurate. No doubt this accounts for the exact renderings of Creole speech and Acadian dialect in her fiction. Her graphic descriptive and narrative powers are summed up by one who remembers her, in the simple words: "She told a story well."

[4] *A Night in Acadie,* p. 156.

She was completely happy. Nor is this an idle matter to mention. She was really just a girl completely happy with her home, her husband, and in the eager expectation of the time when her first child would share her life. All the time she was inquisitive, too: wondering, pondering, occasionally puzzled, in the mood of her diary, " reasoning, reasoning, reasoning till night and coming to no conclusion."

Like Edna in *The Awakening,* " There were days when she was happy without knowing why. She was happy to be alive and breathing, when her whole being seemed to be one with the sunlight, the color, the odors, the luxuriant warmth of some perfect Southern day. She liked then to wander alone in strange and unfamiliar places. She discovered many a sunny, sleepy corner, fashioned to dream in. And she found it good to dream and to be alone and unmolested.

" There were days when she was unhappy, and did not know why,—when it did not seem worth while to be glad or sorry, to be alive or dead; when life appeared to her like a grotesque pandemonium and humanity like worms struggling blindly toward inevitable annihilation. She could not work on such a day, nor weave fancies to stir her pulses and warm her blood." [5]

These rare pessimistic moods made Kate Chopin an enigma to her acquaintances. Out of her quiet quest for an understanding of human beings—of feminine minds in particular—came later her writings and especially that subtle study of Edna Pontellier and her harassed awakening.

In New Orleans Kate Chopin " began to look with her own eyes; to see and to apprehend the deeper undercurrents of life." [6]

There was material for intensive study of the deeper undercurrents of human nature in Oscar's father, Doctor Victor Jean Baptist Chopin. He deserved a great deal of wonder. In the autumn of 1870 he was living in the old St. Louis Hotel in New Orleans. Chagrined when convinced that Oscar in-

[5] Chapter 19, p. 149.

[6] *The Awakening,* p. 245.

tended to take his young wife to live on the American side of the city, he became for a time distinctly disagreeable to those near him. His attitude changed after the first visit of Oscar with Kate. The Doctor was unable to make sarcastic remarks to his son's vivacious young wife. Her brown eyes looked too calmly at him; her clear fluency of French speech, her perfect accent astounded him. Her fair young loveliness won his admiration. Always at ease, her quick change from vivacity to quizzical seriousness baffled him. He detested music. She made him listen to her as she played the piano and soothed his irritability with French melodies heard in his youth and now almost forgotten.

The Doctor was unquestionably a puzzle. What Kate Chopin wrote of one of her characters was true of him. "[The Doctor] was perhaps unaware that he had coerced his own wife into her grave." A native of France, born in 1815 near Château Thierry, he came to Louisiana after his graduation in medicine. He disliked New Orleans at once. Natchitoches, the oldest town in the state, with a distinctly French suaveness in its delightful atmosphere, pleased him better. He decided to live there.

This young French doctor came to America with an array of very narrow, very set ideas. These he never changed. He would not become an American citizen. He learned English to understand what those about him might say regarding him, but he would speak only French. If circumstances forced him to speak English, he became enraged. His mind was vexatiously narrow on some points. In religious opinions he was deeply tinged with Jansenistic narrowness and pessimism. After a brief residence in America he acquired the adamant conviction that nothing American was of permanent value except American money. One of his determinations was not to marry unless he could have a wife of genuine French lineage. When he met Julia Benoist of Cloutierville, Louisiana, he was satisfied. Her lineage was without reproach, entirely French; her inheritance too was worth his esteem. They were married June 31, 1842. Julia Benoist's ancestry that satisfied her husband's rigid requirements is recorded with quotations from authentic records in the romantically written *Histoire des Grandes Familles Françaises Du Canada Aperçu Sur Le Chevalier Benoist et Quelques Familles Contemporaines,* edited by Eusebe Senecal and published at Montreal in 1867.

After his marriage the Doctor abandoned the practice of medicine to devote his attention to his wife's estates. He purchased, in 1854, a tract of five thousand acres on both sides of the Red River, formerly the famed McAlpin Plantation.[7] Controversy continually smoulders and frequently flares into heated debate about that plantation. Who shall decide the assertions or denials that Harriet Beecher Stowe spent some time on the McAlpin Plantation, gathering material for her romantic and indignant outburst, *Uncle Tom's Cabin*?

As the Doctor's landed possessions increased, his temper and his greed grew steadily. He became, according to the traditions in the memories of his descendants and the descendants of his neighbors, as " mean "—that is the word ever associated with his career—as Robert McAlpin, the supposed original of Simon Legree, is said to have been. More and more cruel, you will be told in Cloutierville and in Natchitoches today, how he wanted no time wasted, no social frivolities. With his wife and children he lived stingily in their spacious plantation home. At times when his wife, Julia Benoist, indicated her desire to go for a visit to her mother, he locked her in her room. Horses were needed to work in the fields, not to draw carriages about. His wife's mother, Madame Suzette Rachal Benoist, resorted to the ruse of sending her own carriage for her daughter. The Doctor noticed this, after a few successful attempts, and ordered the coachman to drive away. Where slaves were inexpensive he had few. His wife could do housework well enough. Louisiana Creoles generally treated their slaves with kindness. The Doctor preferred harsh measures; in consequence, his slaves continually tried to run away. Overseers would not work for him. When Oscar was just a boy, the Doctor tried to make him overseer.

[7] Record in Succession, No. 34188, in Civil District Court of New Orleans.

To facilitate matters all his slaves were chained in a row to work in one field at a time. From sunrise to sunset the boy and the slaves toiled in the field together. Oscar, generous-hearted like his mother, did not force them to work. The Doctor stormed. Oscar ran away to live with relatives and did not return till the prospect of going to France was a certainty.

The Doctor's reputation as a "mean man" seems well deserved. It is something of a legend in the parish of Natchitoches. Perhaps because he owned the McAlpin Plantation some of his oddities of behavior have been thrust back upon the unfortunate memory of Robert McAlpin. Perhaps some of the odious traits that linger about the memory of Robert McAlpin have come forward to cloud the remembrance of Doctor Chopin. A strange confusion exists on both sides.

The Civil War harassed the Doctor, by disturbing his complacent greed. With a sudden determination that pleased his neighbors and his family he returned with his wife and children to France, to Château Thierry, the place of his birth.

A grandson of Doctor Chopin, Matthew Chopin of Derry, Louisiana, who served in the 89th Division of the A. E. F. during the World War has written a memoir of his war experiences, *Through the Valley of Death.* In this volume finished at Trier, Germany, during January, 1919, and published in New Orleans in 1921, there is a brief reference in the Sixth Chapter appropriate here.

> As I passed through the silent streets of Château Thierry the land of my ancestry—now a "land of ruins, a land of memories"—I thought of my father, whose boyish feet had trodden many times the very ground on which I stood! What was once a beautiful and peaceful French town now appeared a ruin of crumbling walls and shell torn roofs.

In France during our Civil War the Doctor consoled himself with the assurance that his plantations were in the care of an honest man, Jules Bertrand, and that his children would be educated in the native French tradition. It is not, of course, imaginable that as a Frenchman he had doubts of the merits of the Jesuit schools in New Orleans or the French Marists at Jefferson College, near Convent, Louisiana, but he had his misgivings as to the intelligence of others who, born in America or Great Britain, were instructors at these institutions.

His business acumen is evidenced by the investments he made in French railroad stocks. The inventory of his assets in France, made May 1, 1872, showed heavy investments in the *Chemin de fer du Nord,* the *Paris, Lyon et Méditerraneen Railroad,* the *Orleans Railroad,* and the *Chemin de fer du Midi.* After six years of comparative peace and joy for the wife and children, their sojourn in France ended abruptly. Caught in the excitement preliminary to the war with Prussia, the Doctor, distracted and embittered, returned with his family to Louisiana. Under the conscientious care of Jules Bertrand his plantations had flourished.

In Louisiana the Doctor invested in more land. He bought a small plantation on the north side of the Cane River, at the succession sale of John Garnahan. His possessions in land proved valuable to his descendants. When the constant worry that surrounded her life broke his wife's health, the Doctor reluctantly moved to New Orleans for her benefit. They lived on Royal Street, between Conti and St. Louis Streets. In the succession papers[8] in the Civil District Court of New Orleans the house number is 18—. The last figure is torn from the page. Their names do not appear in any city directory.

With the intention of learning American business methods Oscar Chopin, now twenty-five years of age, left New Orleans for St. Louis, where he met Katherine O'Flaherty, became engaged, and had to return hurriedly to New Orleans. His mother died suddenly April 15, 1870. Oscar married Katherine O'Flaherty June 9, 1870.

Not long after the death of his wife Doctor Chopin moved to a hotel that had been the center of Creole fashionable life in New Orleans, the old St. Louis Hotel. This edifice with its ornate magnificence of an older day should have been kept intact, but ruthless progress destroyed the building in 1917 to make way for an empty plot of ground, occupied in 1930 by a gaudy and vulgar " Patio Miniature Golf Course." What a misfortune! John Galsworthy wrote a worthy sketch of the deserted hotel's gloomy grandeur and called it " That Old Time Place," just a short time before the building was razed. In the old Hotel the Doctor lived alone. His younger children were with relatives in Cloutierville. Eugenie had married Joseph Henry of Natchitoches before Oscar went to St. Louis.

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[8] Number 33743.

This was the old man whom Katherine O'Flaherty Chopin surprised and pleased. He was neither well nor happy; particularly unhappy when there was no one to disagree with. His irritable, peevish existence ended with death on the 13th of November, 1870.

A Solemn Requiem Mass was sung for the repose of his soul in the St. Louis Cathedral of New Orleans on November 15th. He was buried in the old St. Louis Cemetery, Number 3. In the old tome where registries are made you may read the carefully worded details of the location of his grave, finely cared for now by granddaughters he never knew.

A pathway with sharp turns along rows of irregularly built tombs leads to " Tomb No. 37 face à la grande allée à droite dans le 2ème ilet d'après l'ancien plan et désigné d'après le Nouveau plan par le No. 40 rangée (G) face à l'avenue St. Louis dans le 2ème ilet du nouveau cimetière St. Louis rue Esplanade."

Doctor Chopin and his wife are both buried there.

Mrs. O'Flaherty, Kate Chopin's mother, came to New Orleans for the Mardi Gras festivities of 1871, and remained with the Chopins for several months after the birth, on May 22, 1871, of their first son Jean. The four other sons and the daughter were born before the Chopin family moved to Cloutierville. Oscar, born September 24, 1873; George, October 28, 1874; Frederick, January 15, 1876, can claim St. Louis as their birthplace. Felix, the youngest son, and Lelia, the only daughter, were born in New Orleans.: the former, January 8, 1878; the latter, December 31, 1880. Before her thirtieth birthday Kate Chopin was the mother of six children.

The frequent and protracted visits to St. Louis were made at the pleasant insistence of Mrs. O'Flaherty, who, besides a natural desire to have her only living child at home with her from time to time, induced Katherine to rely upon the competent medical advice of their old family physician, Dr. Frederick Kolbenheyer. He became, after Oscar's death, a cordially accepted intimate friend, almost an ardent admirer of Kate Chopin, whose religious opinions and philosophic attitude toward life were strongly influenced by this scholarly Austrian doctor's beliefs and opinions. One of Kate Chopin's sons was named after him.

Oscar occasionally accompanied his wife to St. Louis to renew acquaintances there. In the spring of 1874 husband and wife were both in St. Louis during the illustrious days that attended the opening of that "wonderful bridge" across the Mississippi, designed by James B. Eads. In the late summer of 1874 the Chopins moved from their Magazine Street residence in New Orleans to Constantinople Street, on the northeast corner of Pitt Street, where they lived until the increasing claims of their growing family required a more spacious home. Their last New Orleans residence was a splendid house with extensive gardens all about it on Louisiana Avenue (No. 209 in the old order of house numbering) between Coliseum and Prytania Streets—the "Garden District" of the city. I am indebted to Mrs. L. Tyler of Newark, N. J., who was a frequent visitor to the Chopin home on Louisiana Avenue in 1878 and 1879, for her remembrances of those days:

> Oscar, ever jovial and cheerful and fun-loving and really very stout, liked to romp with the children through the house and about the gardens. "I like disorder when it is clean" was his favorite saying. Kate was devoted to Oscar and thought him perfect. She enjoyed smoking cigarettes, but if friends who did not approve of smoking came to visit her, she would never offend them. She was individual in the style of her clothes as in everything else. She loved music and dancing, and the children were

always allowed to enjoy themselves. The long summer vacation times were spent with the children at Grand Isle.

These summers on the Gulf Coast with the Creoles of New Orleans were a revelation to Kate Chopin, because her life on the American side of the city was separated from the romantic customs and characteristics of the Creoles, whose easy familiarity is recorded in *The Awakening*. The impression upon Edna is a reflection of the impressions made upon Kate Chopin in similar situations.

> There were only Creoles that summer at Lebrun's. They all knew each other, and felt like one large family, among whom existed the most amicable relations. A characteristic which distinguished them and which impressed [Edna] most forcibly was their entire absence of prudery. Their freedom of expression was at first incomprehensible to her, though she had no difficulty in reconciling it with a lofty chastity which in the Creole woman seems to be inborn and unmistakable.
>
> Never would Edna forget the shock with which she heard Madame Ratignolle relating to old Monsieur Farival the harrowing story of one of her *accouchements,* withholding no intimate detail. She was growing accustomed to like shocks, but she could not keep the mounting color back from her cheeks. Oftener than once her coming had interrupted the droll story with which Robert was entertaining some amused group of married women.
>
> A book had gone the rounds of the *pension*. When it came her turn to read it, she did so with profound astonishment. She felt moved to read the book in secret and solitude, though none of the others had done so—to hide it from view at the sound of approaching footsteps. It was openly criticised and freely discussed at table. Edna gave over being astonished, and concluded that wonders would never cease.[9]

Grand Isle is off the marshy seacoast of Louisiana, directly south of New Orleans. It is the largest of a group of low-lying islands that form a fantastic archipelago, wide shining strips of sand studded with luxuriant green foliage, with palmettos and palms, banana trees, lemon trees, and orange trees. Toward the west rises another island, Chênière Caminada, a mound of white overspread with twisted live-oak trees. The blue waters of the Gulf wash over the reedy marshland of the Louisiana coast, broken by bright bays into which empty the rivers and bayous and lagoons that cross and recross the whole "Trembling Prairie" bordering on mysterious Barateria Bay.

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[9] Chapter IV, pp. 23–24.

Grand Isle was, for a decade or more, the favorite summer resort of Louisiana's most distinguished Creoles. Chênière Caminada was, for a longer period, the resort of the less opulent residents of the southern parishes of the state. The vogue of such spots as Grand Isle changes as quickly as it is created. From meager beginnings, with the enthusiastic approval of the few who had discovered a place free from "new people" the Isle had, in Kate Chopin's time, become the secluded resort of several hundred persons occupying an old building and hastily erected cottages, in rooms which they would have refused with scorn in the city. The "old building," the *pension,* is the scene of several incidents in Kate Chopin's short story "At Chênière Caminada," and in *The Awakening.*

> Madame Lebrun's *pension* consisted of a group of plain, stoutly built cottages that stood in mid island, about half a mile from the sea. . . .[10] The main building was called "the house" to distinguish it from the cottages [11] . . . which were always filled with exclusive visitors from the *Quartier Français.*[11]

Chênière Caminada was essentially a settlement of fishermen. Their small, lightly built huts, stretched in a long row on the shore, were fronted by the boathouses where in the summer the luggers, engaged in the fall and winter trade in shrimp, were stowed away. During the first week of October 1893, a tropical storm brought permanent disaster to Grand Isle and Chênière Caminada. Far away in St. Louis at the time, Kate Chopin, ever alert for short-story scenes and situations, was reminded by the newspaper accounts of her stay on the coast.

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[10] "At Chênière Caminada" in *A Night in Acadie,* p. 321.

[11] *The Awakening,* pp. 3 and 9.

She wrote "At Chênière Caminada," though the story waited a year before a publisher accepted it. Some of the characters and incidents of this short story reappeared in 1899 in *The Awakening,* the main theme and the last desperate, despairing act of its heroine being taken, according to the testimony of the Hon. Phanor Breazeale of Natchitoches, from the life history of a woman well known to the "exclusive visitors from the *Quartier Français.*"

During the ten years of her married life in New Orleans, Kate Chopin never attempted to write or take notes. Entries in her diary are fragmentary jottings—mere plans or descriptions of adventures through the parts of the city and its environs that appealed to her fancy. It was her delight to roam about in the mornings. She took cigarettes with her and smoked whenever opportunity allowed.

Without literary intentions, she was, however, gathering impressions for the materials of her stories in future years. None of the peculiar details that individually differentiate New Orleans from other localities, or collectively make it a fabulous city, seems to have attracted her interest at first. With genuine unpretentiousness the jottings mention her apparent gleeful discovery of the lavishly painted "mule cars" running in and out of Canal Street. To her, as a stranger, the definite color or combination of colors painted on the seventeen lines of horse- or mule-drawn street cars, to indicate the destination of each line, was confusing, often amusing. In her short story "Cavanelle," the experience of confusing the colors is recorded: "Over and over I was given the most minute directions for finding the house. The green car—or was it the yellow or blue one? I can no longer remember."[12]

One of the early entries in her New Orleans diary mentions a ride in a "green car" that ran out to the west end of Canal Street as far as the cemeteries on Metairie Ridge. The day was hot and a bustling Creole woman was generous and unconventional with refreshments at the " Half-Way House " on the shell road midway between the city and Lake Pontchartrain.

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[12] *A Night in Acadie,* p. 357.

This incident, with variations and comments on women and life, was fitted into the unusual thirty-sixth chapter of *The Awakening,* where Edna, " because all sense of reality had gone out of her life . . . had abandoned herself to Fate, and awaited the consequence with indifference." While Fate seemed reluctant to hasten the consequences, Edna did nothing to hurry Fate.

> There was a garden out in the suburbs; a small, leafy corner, with a few green tables under the orange trees. An old cat slept all day on the stone step in the sun and an old *mulatresse* slept her idle hours away in her chair at the open window, till some one happened to knock on one of the green tables. She had milk and cream cheese to sell, and bread and butter. There was no one who could make such excellent coffee or fry a chicken so golden brown as she.
>
> The place was too modest to attract the attention of people of fashion, and so quiet as to have escaped the notice of those in search of pleasure and dissipation. Edna had discovered it accidentally one day when the high-board gate stood ajar. She caught sight of a little green table, blotched with the checkered sunlight that filtered through the quivering leaves overhead. Within she had found the slumbering *mulatresse,* the drowsy cat, and a glass of milk which reminded her of the milk she had tasted in Iberville.
>
> She often stopped there during her perambulations, sometimes taking a book with her, and sitting an hour or two under the trees when she found the place deserted. Once or twice she took a quiet dinner there alone, having instructed Celestine beforehand to prepare no dinner at home. It was the last place in the city where she would have expected to meet anyone she knew.
>
> Still she was not astonished, when, as she was partaking of a modest dinner late in the afternoon, looking into an open book, stroking the cat, which had made friends with her—she was not greatly astonished to see Robert come in at the tall garden gate. . . .
>
> " Isn't this a delightful place? " she remarked. " I am so glad it has never actually been discovered. It is so quiet, so sweet

here. Do you notice there is scarcely a sound to be heard? It's so out of the way; and a good walk from the car. However, I don't mind walking. I always feel so sorry for women who don't like to walk; they miss so much—so many rare little glimpses of life; and we women learn so little of life on the whole."

Kate Chopin must have traversed the routes of the entire street railway system of New Orleans in the grotesque little cars of that period. The passenger on entering dropped the fare in a box. Meanwhile the driver—totally unconcerned about the riders within his jolting car—seated on a stool behind a dashboard reinforced with a stout facing of sheet iron, managed the mule as best he could. Car bells jingled to the regular or irregular ring of the animal's hoofs upon the cobble stones.

In these "sight-seeing" notes Kate Chopin gives no indications of her own opinions, no expression of her reflections on places visited or people encountered.

Frequent mention of the New Orleans levee indicates her interest in the scenes along the river front—the diagonally wedged-in boats, the stevedores, the piles of cotton and other merchandise; the carts, mules, and negroes affording sights and studies to her inquisitive mind.

Unconventionality never bothered her.

The very last entry in her New Orleans diary gives the impression that Kate Chopin's curiosity prompted her to see the actual side of her husband's business. Oscar began his business career as a cotton factor in a dingy little office on Union Street, Number 26, in the old order of numbers. This last entry is the account of a "journey with Oscar through the district of warehouses where cotton is stored and when sold passes under presses of immense power, reducing bales to half their size for better storage aboard ship." They visited the "pickeries where damaged cotton is bleached and otherwise repaired. The whole process of weighing, sampling, storing, compressing, boring to detect fraud, and the treatment of damaged bales is open to public view." On every side she heard talk of "too much rain for cotton"; and from everyone interested the lament that "cotton was shedding."

In the South the prejudice against trade did not operate against the cotton factor. Always from a good family, he was a patrician in the world of business. The planter consigned his cotton to the factor and accepted his accounting as from a gentleman. With nothing more definite than a personal pledge, the factor loaned the planter money for cotton production. The factor was the link between the plantation and the economic world outside. With the planter the cotton factor's relations were primarily economic, though in a personal and intimate way. As a matter of fact, the factor was wholesale merchant, banker, and cotton agent. He handled the planter's money, and supplied home necessities and comforts to the planter, and through him to his employees. Indeed, the factor was a busy and hard-working man. If occasionally he retired a wealthy man, the hazards of his business were just as likely to destroy his fortune over one or two bad seasons. Factorage reflected the hazards of cotton planting.

Cotton factors developed and maintained strict standards of business honor and occupied high social positions.

Toward the end of 1870, about the time Oscar opened his office on Union Street, there was considerable agitation and discussion among those interested in the cotton trade—planters, factors, shippers, spinners and speculators—for a *new* Cotton Exchange Building in New Orleans. The project did not materialize at that time.

Wallace Offdean, a character in the first story Kate Chopin ever attempted, is a real portrait of Oscar in 1870:[13]

> What he wanted, now that he had reached his twenty-sixth year and his inheritance, was to get his feet well planted on solid ground, and to keep his head cool and clear.
>
> With his early youth he had had certain shadowy intentions of shaping his life on intellectual lines. That is, he wanted to; and he meant to use his faculties intelligently, which means more than

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[13] Written in 1888 as "Euphrasie," this story after many revisions was published in the *Century* for January, 1894, as "A No Account Creole."

> is at once apparent. Above all, he would keep clear of the maelstroms of sordid work and senseless pleasure in which the average American business man may be said alternately to exist, and which reduce him, naturally, to a rather ragged condition of soul.
>
> Offdean had done, in a temperate way, the usual things which young men do who happen to belong to good society, and are possessed of moderate means and healthy instincts. He had gone to college, had traveled a little at home and abroad, had frequented society and the clubs, and had worked in his uncle's commission-house; in all of which employments he had expended much time and a modicum of energy.
>
> But he felt all through that he was simply in a preliminary state of being, one that would develop later into something tangible and intelligent, as he liked to tell himself. With his patrimony of twenty-five thousand dollars came what he felt to be the turning point in his life—the time when it behooved him to choose a course, and to get himself into proper trim to follow it manfully and consistently.

Business as a cotton factor was "something tangible and intelligent" and profitable, for in 1873 Oscar added to his successful factorage business the more varied advantages of a commission merchant, and moved his office to élite Carondelet Street.

In the "Business Directory of the Principal and Leading Houses and Firms," published in the *New Orleans Price Current, Commercial Intelligenser and Merchants Transcript,* in the issue of Wednesday morning October 8, 1873, appeared for the first time a new announcement:

> CHOPIN, OSCAR—Cotton Factor and Commission Merchant. No. 65 Carondelet St., New Orleans.

As a commission merchant Oscar employed an array of clerks who spent part of every day's lively activity in closely watching the ups and downs of the market on a multitude of articles—prices of "brooms and brushes, blacking, tumblers, bottles, hermetically sealed fruit, playing cards, candles, whiskey, tobacco, segars, soap, starch, nuts, sugar, molasses, corn."[14]

From 1873 to 1877 Oscar's business was carried on at the 65 Carondelet Street address. In 1878, to have more extensive office space for the increase of trade and business, he moved to 77 Carondelet Street. In 1880 his business failed. Extravagant advances to planters after the unfortunately small cotton yields of 1878 and 1879 caused financial difficulties from which he did not recover. After paying all his own debts he moved with his wife and family to one of his father's landed properties at Cloutierville, Natchitoches Parish, Louisiana.

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[14] The details are from one of Oscar's bulletins.

Chapter VII

THE CHATELAINE OF CLOUTIERVILLE

CLOUTIERVILLE in the flat and fertile Cane River region of central Louisiana, is a few miles south of Natchitoches, the oldest town in the state. It is the background and the locale of many of Kate Chopin's short stories. She described it perfectly in the story, " For Marse Chouchoute ": [1]

> This little French village was simply two long rows of very old frame houses, facing each other closely across a dusty roadway that skirted the river bank, steep in places and crumbling away.

More details are given in her appealing story, " The Return of Alcibiade ": [2]

> Before the " Texas and Pacific " had joined the cities of New Orleans and Shreveport with its steel bands it was a common thing to travel through miles of central Louisiana in a buggy. Fred Bartner, a young commission merchant of New Orleans, on business bent had made the trip in this way by easy stages from his home to a point on Cane River, within a half day's journey of Natchitoches. From the mouth of Cane River he had passed one plantation after another,—large ones and small ones. There was nowhere sight of anything like a town, *except the little hamlet of Cloutierville,* through which they had sped in the gray dawn.

The loquacious little negro boy who drove the buggy for " Mr. Fred Bartner " explained Cloutierville:

> " Dat town, hit's ole, ole; mos' a hund'ed year' ole, dey say. Uh, uh, look to me like it heap ol'r an' dat," the darkey had commented.

This " ole, ole town " was Kate Chopin's home from 1880 to 1883. Cloutier Ville was founded by an affable and ambitious

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[1] *Bayou Folk,* p. 212.

[2] *Bayou Folk,* pp. 113–114.

Frenchman, Alexander C. Cloutier, who in 1822 selected a site on the grassy bank of the smooth and winding Cane River to organize the inhabitants living in the vicinity. He petitioned the State Legislature to establish a new parish, with the seat of justice in the new little village he had founded and incorporated. A Catholic church was erected at once. To accommodate the civic and political business to be associated with the expected formation of the new parish, Cloutier constructed a large building that remained unused and unoccupied, for the new parish was not created and the town remained a village.[3]

Now as you motor along the new gravel highway from Derry, the nearest railroad station, three miles west, you cross the improved bridges that span the silvery river and its green banks, and come of a sudden, on a turn in the road, into Cloutierville. The first house on the left-hand side as you come from Derry is a quiet dwelling, not large, but with the assurance of generous comfort about it. This was Kate Chopin's home. The gate, the gardens, the walkway, the brick pillars supporting the veranda, the wooden columns holding the roof over the veranda, are the same as when she lived there. This home had been the residence of Oscar's grandmother, Madame Suzette Benoist. The property was never a plantation; it was a dwelling constructed in a style architects speak of today as "the Louisiana type." A framework of heavy cypress timbers has its interstices filled with bricks—*briqueté entre poteux*—as the old expression explained. The two-story house is arranged with four rooms below and four above—two enormous rooms deep, and two equally large rooms wide. The first floor is built of brick, set flush with the ground, and bricks pave the entire lower floor. Front and rear verandas are covered with the wide sweep of the high-pitched roof. The gallery of the second floor is supported by square brick piers, from the top of which ascend slender columns of cypress to support the veranda roof. At the right end of the lower gallery a staircase leads to the second floor.

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[3] *Louisiana . . . Sketches . . . in Cyclopedic Form,* ed by Alcée Fortier, 2 vols., Atlanta, 1909. II, 233.

Until recently the kitchen was housed separately in a brick structure, some distance from the house. There were other structures on the irregularly shaped property—carriage house and stable, a building for storage, the negro servants' quarters. Beyond the estate stretch lonely fields and tracts of forest land leading into a small swamp, and in the distance beautiful Shallow Lake, and Bayou Derbonne. As you stand on the broad veranda in the rear of Kate Chopin's old home you will instantly imagine Désirée, in the story " Désirée's Baby," walking " across a deserted field, where the stubble bruised her tender feet, so delicately shod, and tore her thin gown to shreds."

When you continue along the road beyond Kate Chopin's home, you are attracted by a " General Store," now less neat in appearance, you will be told, than in the days when Oscar Chopin owned the establishment. What Oscar had saved from his disastrous New Orleans business was invested in the purchase of Cloutierville's General Store. He was patronized by all the native inhabitants for miles around because, from the very beginning of his venture in the " General Store " business, he had instructed his two clerks not to charge articles to the deserving poor who came to purchase. None paid cash; every purchase was recorded in the scrubby day-books from which a pencil dangled on a piece of soiled string.

" Mr. Mathurin " in Kate Chopin's story " Azélie "[4] is a picture of Oscar as a proprietor of a country store. The store key " as large as a pistol " that " unlocked and opened the heavy door of the store," and " the pungent odors of the varied wares and provisions massed within " are vivid memories of Kate Chopin's children.

You continue beyond the General Store along the road that follows the river, visible between the houses, to the Catholic church, that marked the termination of the village in 1881. Very Reverend Jean Marie Beaulieu, pastor of Cloutierville in Kate Chopin's time, is the " Père Antoine " whose sympathy, kindness, and patient understanding are reflected lovingly in many of her stories. Father Beaulieu, ordained in

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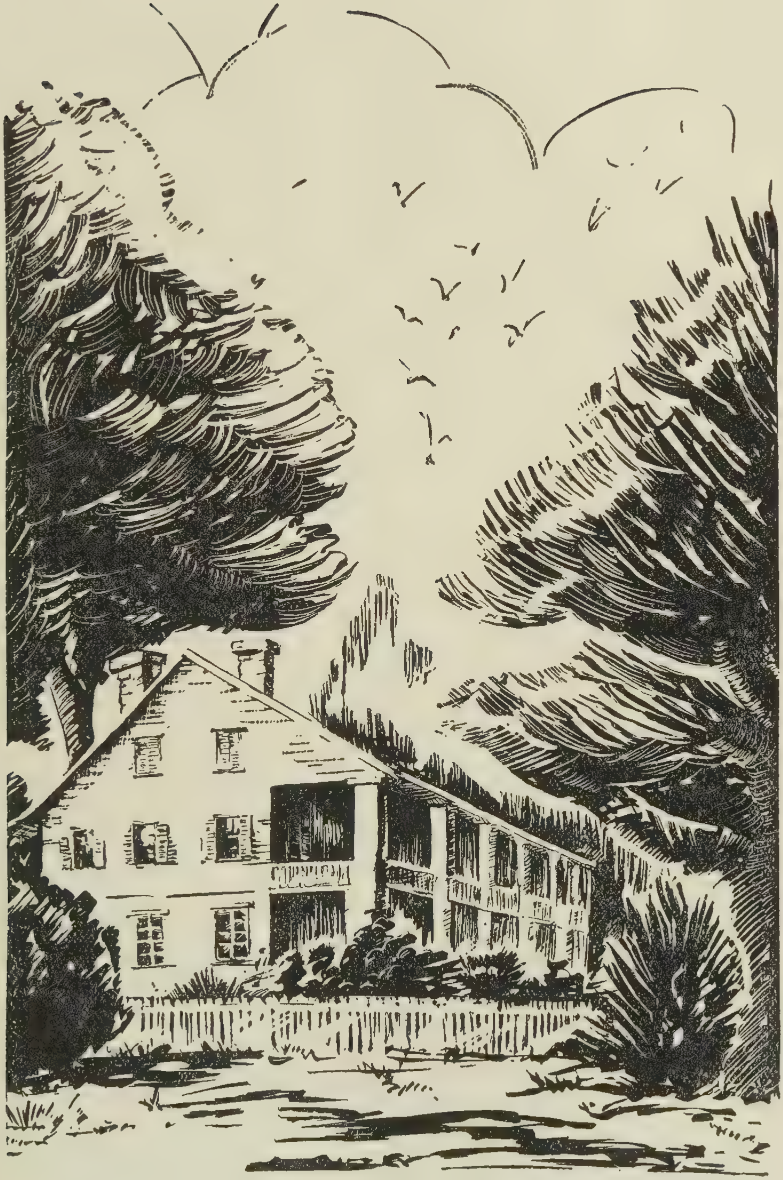
[4] *A Night in Acadie,* p. 229.



KATE CHOPIN'S HOME IN CLOUTIERVILLE

the Cathedral of Natchitoches, May 28, 1855, acted as assistant priest in the parish of Avoyelles for a year, and in the latter part of August 1856 took charge of St. John's Catholic Church at Cloutierville, where he remained over forty years.

Though Kate Chopin did not live on a plantation she became intimately acquainted with the splendor and leisure of post-war Louisiana plantation life through contact with Oscar's many relatives in Natchitoches Parish. Oscar's brother, Lamy Chopin, who had married on January 16, 1878, Miss Cora Henry, daughter of the Hon. Joseph Henry, was living on the McAlpin Plantation, his father's old home. Nearer Natchitoches was the home of the Henry family, Melrose Plantation, charmingly described in the twenty-ninth chapter of Lyle Saxon's *Old Louisiana.* Far down Cane River was " Magnolia," the plantation home of the Hertzog family, one of whose lovely daughters became the second wife of Lamy Chopin, and an intimate friend of Kate Chopin, who in later years on her visits to Natchitoches Parish remained for joyous weeks in the new home Lamy Chopin built at Derry, Louisiana, when the Texas and Pacific Railroad cut through the McAlpin Plantation in 1882. In the city of Natchitoches lived Marie Chopin married to a prominent young lawyer, Phanor Brazeale.

In Cloutierville Kate Chopin's home became the center of social life. Her inherited *esprit* or gaiety, that is, a sub-gaiety which was never frivolity, made her the delight of all her acquaintances. Intellectually superior to her social equals who affectionately admired and approved her tact, her musical and conversational talents, and her astonishing gift of mimicry, she was, in the words of her daughter, the " Lady Bountiful of the neighborhood, dispensing advice and counsel, medicines, and, when necessary, food to the simple people around her, and in this way learning to know them and to love them too, for no matter how keenly they appealed to her wonderful sense of humor, she always touched on their weaknesses fondly and tolerantly, never unkindly." [5]

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[5] Letter of Lelia Chopin Hattersley to Dr. Leonidas Rutledge Whipple, November 12, 1907.

To the town folks, as an elderly Creole lady in Cloutierville told me, " her tight-fitting clothes, her chic hats and a good deal of lavender colors in all her costumes " were constant sources of surprise. " Her love of horseback riding they never understood," the same informant declares, and adds, " Her favorite costume was a fantastic affair—a close-fitting riding habit of blue cloth, the train fastened up at the side to disclose an embroidered skirt, and the little feet encased in pretty boots with high heels. A jaunty little jockey hat and feather, and buff gloves rendered her charming."

Memories of horseback rides with attending adventures are recorded in Kate Chopin's first novel, *At Fault.*

Without conscious effort her alert mind gathered, during the few years at Cloutierville and Natchitoches Parish, the materials later to be developed in her best stories and sketches. Here she met and learned to know the Creole, the half-breed, the freed slave, the Confederate veteran, and the many innocent victims of that bloddy conflict that had raged just twenty years before. Here she found the characters which she was afterwards to describe with such genuine sympathy and true insight: poor terrified La Folle, who for more than thirty years had feared to cross the bayou, and who heroically conquered her terrors to perform an act of devotion; the wretched half-breed Indian girl, Loka, who was saved from a life of shame by her love for the infant Bibine; the honest pride of the poor Acadian, Evariste, who refused to have his portrait painted except as " Mista Evariste Anatole Bonamour, a gent'man of de Bayou Têche "; old Cléophas, who lost his fiddle, and Fifine, who never understood; Aunt Peggy, who says she is a hundred and twenty-five years old; Azenor and his courageous love for Lalie, the granddaughter of coarse Ma'ame Zidore; the once charming Mentine, who had changed beyond the comprehension of one of her lovers. It is her understanding of the elemental human emotions of love, hate, fear, and pride that lends power to the stories of Kate Chopin.

The unusual background of the semi-tropical swamps and canebrakes of central Louisiana she remembered and sketched with careful attention to detail. And the perfect naturalness and simplicity of the warm-blooded and highly temperamental people offered studies of emotional situations and dramatic effects. In the greater part of her writings she inevitably drew upon the vivid early experiences which she enjoyed while her husband was alive.

Suddenly and unexpectedly into the midst of these happiest years came another tragedy. Oscar was seized with a violent attack of " swamp fever " and died in October, 1882. He was buried in the tiny cemetery in Cloutierville, and " Father Antoine " alone knew the grief of his wife. When the business of the General Store and the rental of the properties were arranged, Kate Chopin with her six children returned to St. Louis, her native city, to her mother's home.

Chapter VIII

ST. LOUIS, 1883

AT FAULT

KATE CHOPIN was a most devoted daughter to a most devoted mother. Mrs. O'Flaherty, fifty-seven years old in 1883, looked singularly younger, in spite of her overabundant gray hair. She was attached to but one person in her world—her daughter Katherine, whose life again had become one with her own.

A woman suited to the old-fashioned garden of her home at 1122 Ange Avenue and its familiar flowers, Mrs. O'Flaherty had, together with her poise and her gentility, an assured way of saying gently very positive things to her grandchildren. The Creole way of speaking English, as Mrs. O'Flaherty used it, with her half lost *r*'s and a certain precision in the use of words, delighted Kate Chopin, whose children remember their mother's pride in her mother's speech, and in her indescribable air of caste and good breeding.

When Mrs. O'Flaherty's death occurred suddenly in 1885, Kate Chopin literally was prostrated with grief. Her situation was a particularly trying one, left absolutely alone, without husband, father, mother, brother, or sister. The oldest of her six children was only fourteen years of age. It was probably the very loneliness of her position which first caused her to seek expression in writing. She was now over thirty-four years of age and had not written a line for publication.

After the death of her mother she bought a house in the central part of the city—3317 Morgan Street—that was her home for the next seventeen years.[1] All her literary work was done there. Doctor Kolbenheyer was a constant visitor. He began bringing letters descriptive of Louisiana that she had written from Cloutierville or Grand Isle, and read them to her. He used the manifestations of talent in these letters to persuade and encourage her to write for publication.

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[1] 1886 was a bad year for the compositor of the *St. Louis Directory*. Among other amusing misspellings Kate Chopin is assigned this one—"Katie Choplin." In 1892 her name changes to "Chosin."

On Kate Chopin's religious opinions his influence was important. He was a decided agnostic; genial, witty, determined, a man of tremendous mental capacity, whose cultured insinuating conversations carried conviction to Kate Chopin, to the extent at least that she no longer remained a Catholic in any real or practical way. No doubt there were other influences. But to trace the course of this yielding of her faith is unquestionably difficult, and the possibilities of error are evident. Whatever the combination of influences that united to exert a strong power over Kate Chopin's mind, she became, within a year after her mother's death, a Catholic in name only. She never openly repudiated the faith of her youth; she remained merely indifferent to the practical duties of the Catholic religion.

She had many suitors. I have talked with several who knew her and loved her at this time. All declare they felt themselves in the presence of a rare woman who attracted them by an alluring quality which they found incapable of analysis. All speak of her charm, which made her attractiveness a contribution to the joys of life. All recall as vivid memories occasions with her when, as they watched the firelight shadows flicker on the wall of her study and pass like a caress over her face, they thought of her not as a widow with a household of children, but as a woman of mysterious fascination. To them she seemed to say, in reply to their unspoken avowals, " I have seen other days of life and know the mystery and lure of another's love. You cannot touch my heart."

Always content with her own society, she was by no means dependent upon her friends or admirers. She had her life in her own home—with her thoughts, her dreams, and her children. And though in her fiction she wrote of strange stormy loves, of attachments as brief and fantastic as they were passionate and unsatisfied, she realized that while she still retained the charm of youth in the dignity of the young mother, she possessed attributes of power, freedom, and consideration which once surrendered were less easily again attained.

She preserved her emotional and intellectual independence and kept her numerous attachments with her admirers as well as with her friends. Her whole manner was instinct with a quiet dignity, the reserve that attracts rather than repels. She knew she possessed a quality of sex that is inexplicable, and she realized its power. But her existence was filled with the memory of the great passion of her life—her husband.

The care of her children, reading, music, friendly arguments with the persistent Doctor who would insist she begin to write for publication, and a dread of the future filled her days. Why this dread of the future? Her husband's estate had dwindled; her mother's had vanished. Mrs. O'Flaherty died without knowing that the greatest part of her family estate had disappeared through the unscrupulous misuse of her money and property by a friend whose business seems to have been to prey upon indulgent widows. In this sordid schemer Mrs. O'Flaherty and many other members of the older St. Louis families had implicit trust. He absconded and was never found.

There is a picture of Kate Chopin's days of worry in her story, " A Pair of Silk Stockings." Mrs. Sommers, the little lady whose adventurous determinations make the story, is in a situation and a mood that had been reality to the author. The description of Mrs. Sommers's appearance is a portrait of Kate Chopin. How many women in similar circumstances would have acted differently? The story is distinctly feminine and real, with quiet touches of humor to free it from sentimental pathos. It deserves rescue from the files of *Vogue* where it appeared September 16, 1897.

A PAIR OF SILK STOCKINGS

Little Mrs. Sommers one day found herself the unexpected possessor of fifteen dollars. It seemed to her a very large amount of money, and the way in which it stuffed and bulged her worn old *porte-monnaie* gave her a feeling of importance such as she had not enjoyed for years.

The question of investment was one that occupied her greatly. For a day or two she walked about apparently in a dreamy state, but really absorbed in speculation and calculation. She did not wish to act hastily, to do anything she might afterward regret. But it was during the still hours of the night when she lay awake revolving plans in her mind that she seemed to see her way clearly toward a proper and judicious use of the money.

A dollar or two should be added to the price usually paid for Janie's shoes, which would insure their lasting an appreciable time longer than they usually did. She would buy so and so many yards of percale for new shirt waists for the boys and Janie and Mag. She had intended to make the old ones do by skilful patching. Mag should have another gown. She had seen some beautiful patterns, veritable bargains in the shop windows. And still there would be left enough for new stockings—two pairs apiece—and what darning that would save for a while! She would get caps for the boys and sailor-hats for the girls. The vision of her little brood looking fresh and dainty and new for once in their lives excited her and made her restless and wakeful with anticipation.

The neighbors sometimes talked of certain "better days" that little Mrs. Sommers had known before she had ever though of being Mrs. Sommers. She herself indulged in no such morbid retrospection. She had no time—no second of time to devote to the past. The needs of the present absorbed her every faculty. A vision of the future like some dim, gaunt monster sometimes appalled her, but luckily to-morrow never comes.

Mrs. Sommers was one who knew the value of bargains; who could stand for hours making her way inch by inch toward the desired object that was selling below cost. She could elbow her way if need be; she had learned to clutch a piece of goods and hold it and stick to it with persistence and determination till her turn came to be served, no matter when it came.

But that day she was a little faint and tired. She had swallowed a light luncheon—no! when she came to think of it, between getting the children fed and the place righted, and preparing herself for the shopping bout, she had actually forgotten to eat any luncheon at all!

She sat herself upon a revolving stool before a counter that was comparatively deserted, trying to gather strength and courage to charge through an eager multitude that was besieging breastworks of shirting and figured lawn. An all-gone limp feeling had come over her and she rested her hand aimlessly upon the counter. She wore no gloves. By degrees she grew aware that her hand had encountered something very soothing, very pleasant to touch. She looked down to see that her hand lay upon a pile of silk stockings. A placard near by announced that they had been reduced in price from two dollars and fifty cents to one dollar and ninety-eight cents; and a young girl who stood behind the counter asked her if she wished to examine their line of silk hosiery. She smiled, just as if she had been asked to inspect a tiara of diamonds with the ultimate view of purchasing it. But she went on feeling the soft, sheeny luxurious things—with both hands now, holding them up to see them glisten, and to feel them glide serpent-like through her fingers.

Two hectic blotches came suddenly into her pale cheeks. She looked up at the girl.

"Do you think there are any eights-and-a-half among these?"

There were any number of eights-and-a-half. In fact, there were more of that size than any other. Here was a light-blue pair; there were some lavender, some all black and various shades of tan and gray. Mrs. Sommers selected a black pair and looked at them very long and closely. She pretended to be examining their texture, which the clerk assured her was excellent.

"A dollar and ninety-eight cents," she mused aloud. "Well, I'll take this pair."

She handed the girl a five-dollar bill and waited for her change and for her parcel. What a very small parcel it was! It seemed lost in the depths of her shabby old shopping-bag.

Mrs. Sommers after that did not move in the direction of the bargain counter. She took the elevator, which carried her to an upper floor into the region of the laides' waiting-rooms. Here, in a retired corner, she exchanged her cotton stockings for the new silk ones which she had just bought. She was not going through any acute mental process or reasoning with herself, nor was she striving to explain her satisfaction as the motive of her action. She was not thinking at all. She seemed for the time to be taking a rest from that laborious and fatiguing function and to have abandoned herself to some mechanical impulse that directed her actions and freed her of responsibility.

How good was the touch of the raw silk to her flesh! She felt like lying back in the cushioned chair and reveling for a while in the luxury of it. She did for a little while. Then she replaced her shoes, rolled the cotton stockings together and thrust them into her bag. After doing this she crossed straight over to the shoe department and took her seat to be fitted.

She was fastidious. The clerk could not make her out; he could not reconcile her shoes with her stockings, and she was not too easily pleased. She held back her skirts and turned her feet one way and her head another way as she glanced down at the polished, pointed-tipped boots. Her foot and ankle looked very pretty. She could not realize that they belonged to her and were a part of herself. She wanted an excellent and stylish fit, she told the young fellow who served her, and she did not mind the difference of a dollar or two more in the price so long as she got what she desired.

It was a long time since Mrs. Sommers had been fitted with gloves. On rare occasions when she had bought a pair they were always "bargains," so cheap that it would have been preposterous and unreasonable to have expected them to be fitted to the hand. Now she rested her elbow on the cushion of the glove counter, and a pretty, pleasant young creature, delicate and deft of touch, drew a long-wristed "kid" over Mrs. Sommers's hand. She smoothed it down over the wrist and buttoned it neatly, and both lost themselves for a second or two in admiring contemplation of the little symmetrical gloved hand. But there were other places where money might be spent.

There were books and magazines piled up in the window of a stall a few paces down the street. Mrs. Sommers bought two high-priced magazines such as she had been accustomed to read in the days when she had been accustomed to do other pleasant things. She carried them without wrapping. As well as she could she lifted her skirts at the crossings. Her stockings and boots and well fitting gloves had worked marvels in her bearing—had given her a feeling of assurance, a sense of belonging to the well-dressed multitude.

She was very hungry. Another time she would have stilled the cravings for food until reaching her own home, where she would have brewed herself a cup of tea and taken a snack of anything that was available. But the impulse that was guiding her would not suffer her to entertain any such thought.

There was a restaurant at the corner. She had never entered its doors; from the outside she had sometimes caught glimpses of spotless damask and shining crystal, and soft-stepping waiters serving people of fashion.

When she entered her appearance created no surprise, no consternation, as she had half feared it might. She seated herself at a small table alone, and an attentive waiter at once approached to take her order. She did not want a profusion; she craved a nice and tasty bite—a half-dozen blue-points, a plump chop with cress, a something sweet—a crème-frappeé, for instance; a glass of Rhine wine, and after all a small cup of black coffee.

While waiting to be served she removed her gloves very leisurely and laid them beside her. Then she picked up a magazine and glanced through it, cutting the pages with a blunt edge of her knife. It was all very agreeable. The damask was even more spotless than it had seemed through the window, and the crystal more sparkling. There were quiet ladies and gentlemen, who did not notice her, lunching at the small tables like her own. A soft, pleasing strain of music could be heard, and a gentle breeze was blowing through the window. She tasted a bite, and she read a word or two, and she sipped the amber wine and wiggled her toes in the silk stockings.

The price of it made no difference. She counted the money out to the waiter and left an extra coin on his tray, whereupon he bowed before her as before a princess of royal blood.

There was still money in her purse, and her next temptation presented itself in the shape of a matinée poster.

It was a little later when she entered the theatre, the play had begun and the house seemed to her to be packed. But there were vacant seats here and there, and into one of them she was ushered, between brilliantly dressed women who had gone there to kill time and eat candy and display their gaudy attire. There were many others who were there solely for the play and acting. It is safe to say there was no one present who bore quite the attitude which Mrs. Sommers did to her surroundings. She gathered in the whole—stage and players and people in one wide impression, and absorbed it and enjoyed it. She laughed at the comedy and wept

—she and the gaudy woman next to her wept over the tragedy. And they talked a little together over it. And the gaudy woman wiped her eyes and sniffled on a tiny square of filmy perfumed lace and passed little Mrs. Sommers her box of candy.

The play was over, the music ceased, the crowd filed out. It was like a dream ended. People scattered in all directions. Mrs. Sommers went to the corner and waited for the cable car.

A man with keen eyes, who sat opposite to her, seemed to like the study of her small, pale face. It puzzled him to decipher what he saw there. In truth, he saw nothing—unless he were wizard enough to detect a poignant wish, a powerful longing that the cable car would never stop anywhere, but go on and on with her forever.

Kate Chopin's first published writing was a short poem, "If It Might Be," printed in an iconoclastic Chicago magazine, *America, a Journal for Americans,* January 10th, 1889.[2]

IF IT MIGHT BE

If it might be that thou didst need my life;
Now on the instant would I end this strife
'Twixt hope and fear, and glad the end I'd meet
With wonder only, to find death so sweet.

If it might be that thou didst need my love;
To love thee dear, my life's fond work would prove.
All time, to tender watchfulness I'd give;
And count it happiness, indeed, to live.

Many short lyrics were written during the years to come. There is in all of them a note of love, a free expression of feelings, of tenderness, of wonder, sometimes of regret. Two more of her lyrics was published. "I've Opened All the Portals Wide," appeared in *The Century,* July, 1899 and "Good Night" in *The Times-Democrat,* July 22, 1894.

I've opened all the portals wide
To swallows on the wing;
It matters not what may betide,
I've had the taste, the touch, the breath, the scent, the song of
Spring.

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[2] In 1888 H. Rollman & Sons published in St. Louis her polka for piano, entitled "Lilia."

Oh, fair sweet Spring, abide with me
In joy the whole time long;
Bring all thy life, thy light with thee—
I fain would keep thy touch, thy taste, thy breath, O Spring, thy song.

GOOD NIGHT

Good night, good night!
Good-by it shall not be;
For all the days that come and go, dear love,
'Twixt now and happiness, 'twixt thee and me,
Shall moments dark, oblivious prove.

Until I look into thy tender eyes,
And hear again thy voice, no light,
No day will break; for me no sun will rise—
My own, my well-beloved—good night, good night!

William Schuyler of St. Louis, who had written a biographical and critical essay on Kate Chopin for the August 1894 issue of *The Writer* after *Bayou Folk* appeared, set " I've Opened All the Portals Wide " to music. It was sung with two other poems of hers, also set to music by William Schuyler, at a " Reciprocity Day " meeting of The Wednesday Club of St. Louis, Wednesday, November 29, 1899. Because of Kate Chopin's local importance as an author these songs had considerable popularity as program pieces in St. Louis for many years. " You and I " and " Love Everlasting " are the titles.

LOVE EVERLASTING

The birds are telling it over and over;
So are the flowers.
The bees have been humming it out in the clover
For hours and hours.
Awake Love!

The many tongued voices of nature are ringing
Awake Love!
And list to the song that my soul is singing
Awake Love!

YOU AND I

How many years since we strolled, you and I!
Under the stars and the April sky!
You were young then; I was scarce older,
Then you were shy; nor was I bolder.
Was it love did we feel? was't life did we live?

It was spring-time indeed; but can spring-time give
The fullness of life and love? Completest
When living and loving and roses are sweetest.
Shall we stroll together once more, you and I?
Under the stars and the summer sky?

The record in her notebook of her first attempt to write fiction reads:

EUPH[R]ASIE

Abt 30,000 words 1888—
Gave to Dr. Kolbenheyer—April.
Returned June, 1890
Started to revise Jan. 24–1891
(Called A No Account Creole).

Revised and shortened many times before publication, "A No Account Creole" was accepted and printed in *The Century,* January, 1894. The title had varied in the meantime from "Euphrasie" to "Euphrasie's Lovers," to "A Maid and Her Lovers," and finally "A No Account Creole."

The title does not apply to Euphrasie, the heroine; it is an ironic description of Placide Santien, the rejected suitor.

The notebook describes the second piece of fiction she wrote as an

Unfinished Story—Grand Isle—
30,000 words— . . . —1888–89—
Destroyed.

It is quite possible that this unsatisfactory note may refer to the first draft of what became a decade later *The Awakening.*

Immediately after is written another short jotting, more informative than the preceding. This third story, also "destroyed," was entitled:

A POOR GIRL

Abt 7,000 [words] May 1889.
Returned from Home Mag. Dec. 1—
Objection to incident not desirable
to be handled—remarks " well
written, full of interest. Would
consider if changed."
Gave to John Dillon to read
Dec. 11. Sent to New York Ledger
May 1, 1890. Returned from
N. Y. L. June, 1890.

John Dillon, editor of the St. Louis *Post-Dispatch,* recognized her talent, encouraged her efforts, and introduced her to Charles Deyo, the cleverest newspaper writer in St. Louis at that time. Charles Deyo immediately understood what Kate Chopin was trying to do and spent many hours at her home discussing her manuscripts and offering suggestions.

A short narrative of twenty-five hundred words sent to *The Musical Journal* of Philadelphia, published and edited by Mr. Dion E. Woolley, at 1416 Chestnut Street, was accepted. So it came to pass that the *first short story* Kate Chopin preserved from destruction was published in this Philadelphia magazine for December, 1889.[3] To illustrate her first method this story, " Wiser than a God," may be read in Part II, pp. 199–209. Another short story, " A Point at Issue," was the first printed. The St. Louis *Post-Dispatch* featured it in the issue for October 27, 1889.

Other stories were written in rapid succession at this time, though not all published immediately. The notebook gives the titles with the dates of writing:

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[3] Mr. Woolley, in his letter of April 6, 1932, to the author, says, " The Journal was published by me for five years, beginning January 1886 as a house organ for F. A. North & Co., music publishers. When they disposed of their music publishing business to the Oliver Ditson Company early in 1889, I took over the task of continuing it as an independent enterprise; but during 1890 merged it with another publication and changed the name to 'Music and Drama' which was a weekly. It ran along for two or three years, but did not prove a financial success."

" Wiser than a God "	June, 1889
" A Point at Issue "	August, 1889
" Miss Witherwell's Mistake "	November, 1889
" With the Violin "	December, 1889
" Monsieur Pierre " (translation)	April, 1890

" Wiser than a God " had been written in June, 1889. The translation of " Monsieur Pierre," from the French of Adrien Vely, was finished in April, 1890. Between June and April three other short stories had been completed. These four short stories and the translation become more interesting when viewed in relation to a novel Kate Chopin began to write, according to her notes, on July 5, 1889, and finished on April 20th, 1890. Ten months' time for one translation, four short stories, and one novel.

Kate Chopin's daughter, Mrs. Lelia Hattersley, has described her mother's method in writing:

> She always wrote best in the morning, " when the house was quiet " as she said. She always wrote rapidly with a lead pencil on [a] block [of] paper. When finished, she copied her manuscript in ink, seldom changing a word, never " working over " a story or changing it materially. She did not have a study or any place where she ever really shut herself off from the household. I know now that she often desired to do this when writing, but on the other hand, she never wished to shut us children out of her presence, and with the natural selfishness of children, we never tried to keep her undisturbed as she should have been.[4]

The manuscript of this novel, *At Fault,* was finished on the 20th of April, 1890. The book was published by the Nixon-Jones Printing Co. of St. Louis in September. Kate Chopin's notebook has this record: " Sept. 27, 1890—pd. Nixon & Jones for pub[lishing] 1,000 [copies] *At Fault.*" There was only one edition, in pale green paper covers. The book is now rare. Mrs. Cammie Garrett Henry of Melrose Plantation, Louisiana, possesses a most interesting copy of *At Fault* illustrated with a number of pen-and-ink drawings on the margins and around

[4] Letter to Professor Leonidas Rutledge Whipple, Nov. 12, 1907.

the chapter headings done by Kate Chopin's son Oscar, now a well-known artist living in California.

At Fault is a study of character development and disintegration. It is a domestic drama enacted in sharply contrasted sections of this country—the city of St. Louis and the Place-du-Bois Plantation in central Louisiana. A novel with the scene laid in the Cane River region of Louisiana was a novelty. In her stories and descriptive articles Catherine Cole had sketched that section of Louisiana, Natchitoches Parish, but Kate Chopin was the first to weave the customs and traditions of its people into fiction. *At Fault,* the title of the novel, is unfortunate. More than one character has a valid pretension to it. There is the wife who drinks to excess, the husband who gets a divorce from her, the widow who loves and is beloved by him, but who persuades him to remarry his divorced wife and bring her to the Louisiana plantation, where the widow may have a fostering care of the two. There is also the young lady of many engagements, the negro youth who commits arson, the young Creole gentleman who shoots him, the Texas colonel who shoots the young Creole, the St. Louis lady who goes to matinées and, forgetting she has a husband, runs off with a matinée-going young salesman.

An outline of the story will help to explain the proper application of the title.

David Hosmer of St. Louis, after several years of wedded misery, during which his wife took to drink, was forced to separate from her. In furtherance of one of his business projects he goes to Louisiana where he meets Thérèse Lafirme, a young, childless Creole widow, endowed with the charms of her peculiar race in both appearance and character, who has been managing with success, since her husband's death, a four-thousand-acre plantation, Place-du-Bois. He rents part of the plantation land, builds a sawmill, and engages in lucrative trade.

To Thérèse Lafirme he is a figure of unusual interest, "a man who has never learned to laugh or who has forgotten how."

David Hosmer is attracted to Thérèse—a woman in every respect the opposite of his wife—highly bred, cultivated, with a knowledge of the world and of affairs, tempered by womanly dignity and refinement of character. He declares his love. Through Melicent, Hosmer's young sister who had come to live with him, Thérèse learns he has a divorced wife living. To Thérèse, a Roman Catholic, the marriage tie is indissoluble. She persuades David to remarry his wife and bring her to Place-du-Bois, where Thérèse befriends her. Fanny, the wife, is unworthy, yet in spite of her frivolity, selfishness, and habits of drink, there is a vein of pity in the contempt she inspires. Her nature is to some extent irresponsible. Weak, vulgar, commonplace, she resents Thérèse's friendship with David Hosmer and falls into her old ways.

At this point in the story, Thérèse admits she has been " at fault " in persuading him to remarry Fanny, who stoops to deceit, theft, and the bribery of the negro servants to obtain what her thirst craves.

By the force of its own vitality the plot works itself out to a highly colored, tragic climax. In compassing Fanny's death—the point where under a less clever hand mechanism would have supplanted nature—although there is nothing artificial, there is meager art. In its preparation and accomplishment this startling episode might have been a clever exhibition of artistic skill in maintaining dramatic and excluding melodramatic interests. This it is not.

The novel ends with a picture of domestic happiness, when David and Thérèse, after the death of the unfortunate Fanny, are husband and wife, with an assurance of joy likely to continue many years on the old plantation.

Other characters and incidents give a pleasing variety to the story. The fortunes of Grégoire Santien, a nephew of Thérèse, and the whims of the five-times-engaged Melicent are woven skillfully into the main narrative. These two characters are charming in their unaffected naturalness, particularly in the chapter " In a Pirogue " that recounts Melicent's adventures with Grégoire on the Bayou and Lake Du Bois. The chapter is noteworthy in two ways. First, it is a realistic, accurate description of the bayou country. Second, it contains the first definite mention in American fiction of a character who has raised many difficulties and caused a flaring controversy—Robert McAlpin, (called Robert McFarlane in *At Fault*) the New England bachelor who lived and died in Louisiana, and who is supposed by some to have been the original Simon Legree of Harriet Beecher Stowe's *Uncle Tom's Cabin.*

Place-du-Bois Plantation in *At Fault* is the old McAlpin Plantation, purchased by Dr. V. J. D. Chopin after McAlpin's death, and in the possession of Mr. Lamy Chopin, Sr., at the time *At Fault* was written. The first chapter of *At Fault* is a graphic description of the McAlpin plantation in 1882, the year the Texas and Pacific Railroad built through the property and erected a small railroad station, today named in its time tables " Chopin, La."

> The short length of this Louisiana plantation stretched along Cane River, meeting the water when that stream was at its highest, with a thick growth of cotton-wood trees; save where a narrow convenient opening had been cut into their midst, and where further down, the pine hills started in abrupt prominence from the water and the dead level of land on either side of them. These hills extended in a long line of gradual descent far back to the wooded borders of Lac du Bois; and within the circuit which they formed on one side, and the irregular half circle of a sluggish bayou on the other, lay the cultivated open ground of the plantation—rich in its exhaustless powers of reproduction.
>
> Among changes which the railroad brought soon after Jerome Lafirme's death, and which were viewed by many as of questionable benefit, was one which drove Thérèse to seek another domicile. The old homestead that nestled to the hill side and close to the water's edge, had been abandoned to the inroads of progressive civilization; and Mrs. Lafirme had rebuilt many rods away from the river and beyond sight of the mutilated dwelling, converted now into a section house. In building, she avoided the temptations offered by modern architectural innovations, and clung to the simplicity of large rooms and broad verandas: a style whose merits had stood the test of easy-going and comfort-loving generations.

> The negro quarters were scattered at wide intervals over the land, breaking with picturesque irregularity into the systematic division of field from field; and in the early spring-time gleaming in their new coat of whitewash against the tender green of the sprouting cotton and corn.
>
> Thérèse loved to walk the length of the wide verandas, armed with her field-glass, and to view her surrounding possessions with comfortable satisfaction. Then her gaze swept from cabin to cabin; from patch to patch; up to the pine capped hills, and down to the station which squatted a brown and ugly intruder within her fair domain.
>
> She had made pouting resistance to this change at first, opposing it step by step with a conservatism that yielded only to the resistless. She pictured a visionary troop of evils coming in the wake of the railroad, which in her eyes no conceivable benefits could mitigate. The occasional tramp, she foresaw as an army; and the travelers whom chance deposited at the store that adjoined the station, she dreaded as an endless processoin of intruders forcing themselves upon her privacy.

In the accounts of Robert McAlpin, who lived and died a bachelor on his remote plantation that Kate Chopin uses as the background for her novel, there is a monotonous repetition of his reputation for cruelty and harshness with his slaves, especially with an "Uncle Tom." A collection of such anecdotes was compiled in the form of affidavits by an ingenious meddler, a Judge Daniel B. Corley of Abilene, Texas, to sell at the World's Fair in Chicago in 1893, where he exhibited the supposed cabin of "Uncle Tom," rented to him with reluctance, on a percentage of profit basis, by Mr. Lamy Chopin, Sr.[4] It is pleasant to recount that the profits from this absurd venture were, from the testimony of Mr. Lamy Chopin, Jr., not large. In 1924 a violent discussion was carried on in the press of Louisiana over the proposal to name a new road running through the old McAlpin plantation "The Uncle Tom Trail." Many believe McAlpin was the original "Simon Legree" and his slave Tom the original "Uncle Tom." Many others as emphatically deny the charges. No hope exists for the settlement of the controversy.

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[4] Daniel B. Corley, *A Visit to Uncle Tom's Cabin,* Chicago, 1892. 75 pp.

What no one seems to remember is the undeniable fact that Dr. V. J. B. Chopin, the purchaser of the McAlpin plantation, was outrageously cruel to his slaves. His descendants tell many stories of the Doctor's wrath and its effects on his servants. Could not, for instance, some of the affidavits collected by Judge Corley and some of the harshness associated with McAlpin's name have been inspired by the more recent recollections of Dr. Chopin's cruelty?

"Innocent or guilty," as Lyle Saxon sums up the matter in his impartial chapter on the controversy in *Old Louisiana,* "McAlpin never knew that his name and Legree's were linked together. He died [in 1852] as he had lived, alone, and was buried among his slaves."

Kate Chopin wrote *At Fault* before the controversy became violent. To show her vivid descriptive pictures of persons and places, and to follow the McAlpin legend, with the dread and superstitious awe associated with his memory, as revealed in the conversations between Melicent and Grégoire on their explorations in a *pirogue* along the bayou, the third chapter must be quoted.

IN THE PIROGUE

"You got to set mighty still in this pirogue," said Grégoire, as with a long oar-stroke he pulled out into mid stream.

"Yes, I know," answered Melicent complacently, arranging herself opposite him in the long narrow boat; all sense of danger which the situation might arouse being dulled by the attractiveness of a new experience.

Her resemblance to Hosmer ended with height and slenderness of figure, olive tinted skin, and eyes and hair which were of that dark brown often miscalled black; but unlike his, her face was awake with an eagerness to know and test the novelty and depth of unaccustomed sensation. She had thus far lived an unstable existence, free from the weight of responsibilities, with a notion lying somewhere deep in her consciousness that the world must one day be taken seriously; but that contingency was yet too far away to disturb the harmony of her days.

She had eagerly responded to her brother's suggestion of spending a summer with him in Louisiana. Hitherto, having passed her summers North, West, or East as alternating caprice prompted, she was ready at a word to fit her humor to the novelty of a season at the South. She enjoyed in advance the startling effect which her announced intention produced upon her intimate circle at home; thinking that her whim, deserved the distinction of eccentricity with which they chose to invest it. But Melicent was chiefly moved by the prospect of an uninterrupted sojourn with her brother, whom she loved blindly, and to whom she attributed qualities of mind and heart which she thought the world had discovered to use against him.

" You got to set mighty still in this pirogue."

" Yes, I know; you told me so before," and she laughed.

" W'at are you laughin' at?" asked Grégoire with amused but uncertain expectancy.

" Laughing at you, Grégoire; how can I help it?" laughing again.

" Betta wait tell I do somethin' funny, I reckon. Aint this a putty sight?" he added, referring to the dense canopy of an overarching tree, beneath which they were gliding, and whose extreme branches dipped quite into the slow moving water.

The scene had not attracted Melicent. For she had been engaged in observing her companion rather closely; his personality holding her with a certain imaginative interest.

The young man who she so closely scrutinized was slightly undersized, but of close and brawny build. His hands were not so refinedly white as those of certain office bred young men of her acquaintance, yet they were not coarsened by undue toil: it being somewhat an axiom with him to do nothing that an available " nigger " might do for him.

Close fitting, high-heeled boots of fine quality encased his feet, in whose shapeliness he felt a pardonable pride; for a young man's excellence was often measured in the circle which he had frequented, by the possession of such a foot. A peculiar grace in the dance and a talent for bold repartee were further characteristics which had made Grégoire's departure keenly felt among certain belles of upper Red River. His features were handsome, of sharp and refined cut; and his eyes black and brilliant as eyes of an alert and intelligent animal sometimes are. Melicent could not reconcile his voice to her liking; it was too softly low and feminine, and carried a note of pleading or pathos, unless he argued with his horse, his dog, or a " nigger," at which times, though not unduly raised, it acquired a biting quality that served the purpose of relieving him from further form of insistence.

He pulled rapidly and in silence down the bayou, that was now so entirely sheltered from the open light of the sky by the meeting branches above, as to seem a dim leafy tunnel fashioned by man's ingenuity. There were no perceptible banks, for the water spread out on either side of them, further than they could follow its flashings through the rank underbrush. The dull plash of some object falling into the water, or the wild call of a lonely bird were the only sounds that broke upon the stillness, beside the monotonous dipping of the oars and the occasional low undertones of their own voices. When Grégoire called the girl's attention to an object near by, she fancied it was the protruding stump of a decaying tree; but reaching for his revolver and taking quiet aim, he drove a ball into the black up-turned nozzle that sent it below the surface with an angry splash.

" Will he follow us? " she asked, mildly agitated.

" Oh no; he's glad 'nough to git out o' the way. You betta put down yo' veil," he added a moment later.

Before she could ask a reason—for it was not her fashion to obey at word of command—the air was filled with the doleful hum of a gray swarm of mosquitoes, which attacked them fiercely.

"You didn't tell me the bayou was the refuge of such savage creatures," she said, fastening her veil closely about her face and neck, but not before she had felt the sharpness of their angry sting.

" I reckoned you'd a' knowed all about it: seems like you know everything." After a short interval he added, " you betta take yo' veil off."

She was amused at Grégoire's authoritative tone and she said to him laughing, yet obeying his suggestion, which carried a note of command; " You shall tell me always why I should do things."

" All right," he replied; " because they aint any mo' mosquitoes; because I want you to see somethin' worth seein' afta while; and because I like to look at you," which he was doing with the innocent boldness of a forward child. " Aint that 'nough reasons? "

" More than enough," she replied shortly.

The rank and clustering vegetation had become denser as they went on, forming an impenetrable tangle on either side, and pressing so closely above that they often needed to lower their heads to avoid the blow of some drooping branch. Then a sudden and unlooked for turn in the bayou carried them out upon the far-spreading waters of the lake, with the broad canopy of the open sky above them.

"Oh," cried Melicent, in surprise. Her exclamation was like a sigh of relief which comes at the removal of some pressure from body or brain.

The wildness of the scene caught her erratic fancy, speeding it for a quick moment into the realms of romance. She was an Indian maiden of the far past, fleeing and seeking with her dusky lover some wild and solitary retreat on the borders of this lake, which offered them no seeming foothold save such as they would hew themselves with axe or tomahawk. Here and there, a grim cypress lifted its head above the water, and spread wide its moss covered arms inviting refuge to the great black-winged buzzards that circled over and about it in mid-air. Nameless voices—weird sounds that awake a Southern forest at twilight's approach,—were crying a sinister welcome to the settling gloom.

"This is a place thet can make a man sad, I tell you," said Grégoire, resting his oars, and wiping the moisture from his forehead. "I wouldn't want to be yere alone, not fur any money."

"It is an awful place," replied Melicent with a little appreciative shudder; adding, "do you consider me a bodily protection?" and feebly smiling into his face.

"Oh; I aint 'fraid o' any thing I can see and on'erstan'. I can han'le mos' any thing they's got a body. But they do tell some mighty queer tales 'bout this lake an' the pine hills yonda."

"Queer—how?"

"W'y, ole McFarlane's buried up there on the hill; an' they's folks 'round yere says he walks about o' nights; can't rest in his grave fur the niggas he's killed."

"Gracious! and who was old McFarlane?"

"The meanest w'ite man thet ever lived, seems like. Used to own this place long befo' the Lafirmes got it. They say he's the person that Mrs. W'at's her name wrote about in Uncle Tom's Cabin."

"Legree? I wonder if it could be true?" Melicent asked with interest.

"Thet's w'at they all say: ask any body."

"You'll take me to his grave, won't you Grégoire," she entreated.

"Well, not this evenin'—I reckon not. It'll have to be broad day, an' the sun shinin' mighty bright w'en I take you to ole McFarlane's grave."

They had retraced their course and again entered the bayou, from which the light had now nearly vanished, making it needful that they watch carefully to escape the hewn logs that floated in numbers upon the water.

The promised visit to McAlpin's grave is not forgotten:

It was "broad day," one of the requirements which Grégoire had named as essential for taking Melicent to visit old McFarlane's grave. But the sun was not "shining mighty bright," the second condition, and whose absence they were willing enough to overlook, seeing that the month was September.

They had climbed quite to the top of the hill, and stood on the very brink of the deep toilsome railroad cut all fringed with matted grass and young pines, that had but lately sprung there. Up and down the track, as far as they could see on either side the steel rails glittered on into gradual dimness. There were patches of the field before them, white with bursting cotton which scores of negroes, men, women and children were dexterously picking and thrusting into great bags that hung from their shoulders and dragged beside them on the ground; no machine having yet been found to surpass the sufficiency of five human fingers for wrenching the cotton from its tenacious hold. Elsewhere, there were squads "pulling fodder" from the dry corn stalks; hot and distasteful work enough. In the nearest field, where the cotton was young and green, with no show of ripening, the overseer rode slowly between the rows, sprinkling plentifully the dry powder of paris-green from two muslin bags attached to the ends of a short pole that lay before him across the saddle.

Grégoire's presence would be needed later in the day, when the cotton was hauled to gin to be weighed; when the mules were brought to stable, to see them properly fed and cared for, and the gearing all put in place. In the meanwhile he was deliciously idle with Melicent.

They retreated into the woods, soon losing sight of everything but the trees that surrounded them and the underbrush, that was scant and scattered over the turf which the height of the trees permitted to grow green and luxuriant.

There, on the far slope of the hill they found McFarlane's grave, which they knew to be such only by the battered and weather-worn cross of wood, that lurched disreputably to one side—there being no hand in all the world that cared enough to make it straight—and from which all lettering had long since been washed away. This cross was all that marked the abiding place of that mist-like form, so often seen at dark to stalk down the hill with threatening stride, or of moonlight nights to cross the lake in a pirogue, whose substance though visible was nought; with sound of dipping oars that made no ripple on the lake's smooth surface. On stormy nights, some more gifted with spiritual insight than their neighbors, and with hearing better sharpened to delicate intonations of the supernatural, had not only seen the mist figure mounted and flying across the hills, but had heard the panting of blood-hounds, as the invisible pack swept by in hot pursuit of the slave so long at rest.

But it was " broad day," and here was nothing sinister to cause Melicent the least little thrill of awe. No owl, no bat, no ill-omened creature hovering near; only a mocking bird high up in the branches of a tall pine tree, gushing forth his shrill staccatoes as blithely as though he sang paeans to a translated soul in paradise.

" Poor old McFarlane," said Melicent. " I'll pay a little tribute to his memory; I dare say his spirit has listened to nothing but abuse of himself there in the other world, since it left his body here on the hill"; and she took one of the long-stemmed blood-red flowers and laid it beside the toppling cross.

" I reckon he's in a place w'ere flowers don't git much waterin', if they got any there."

" Shame to talk so cruelly; I don't believe in such places."

" You don't believe in hell?" he asked in blank surprise.

" Certainly not. I'm a Unitarian."

" Well, that's new to me," was his only comment.

" Do you believe in spirits, Grégoire? I don't—in day time."

" Neva mine 'bout spirits," he answered, taking her arm and leading her off, " let's git away f'om yere."

They soon found a smooth and gentle slope where Melicent sat herself comfortably down, her back against the broad support of a tree trunk, and Grégoire lay prone upon the ground—his head in Melicent's lap.

. . . .

And so they lingered in the woods, these two curious lovers, till the shadows grew so deep about old McFarlane's grave that they passed it by with hurried step and averted glance.

There are delightful gleams in this novel of real plantation life without the gaudy glamor usually associated with it in fiction. Relations between whites and blacks on the plantation have been sentimentalized and moralized over until it is difficult to find an objective presentation. Kate Chopin's work lessens that difficulty. *At Fault* takes its incidents from the reality of Louisiana plantation life. The situation of the Place-du-Bois Plantation is so retired that there is little change in the state of society since the war. The negroes cultivate the soil, looking to the whites for guidance and protection. Thérèse Lafirme is the " Mistress " of the plantation. The house servants are closest to her. The contacts are primary, their relations cordial, without the sentimentality of the traditional house servants. Kate Chopin's skill portrayed the lives of the whites and blacks as partly segregate, partly intertwined. If any special link is needed, Grégoire's position supplies it. Her portrayal of the southern negro character and dialect shows knowledge learned gradually, and she treats them with the sympathy of one who has caught with exquisite skill the real side of their lives. The little incident of Melicent's difficulty in securing assistance from the negroes in her household is true to life. The scene where Pierson described Grégoire's spree to Uncle Hiram and Aunt Belindy, particularly the comments of the latter on it, are inimitable.

Fanny's boisterous friends from St. Louis, the Worthingtons and the Dawsons, furnish a lively contrast to the delicacy and refinement of the Creoles, especially the Duplan family from Les Chênières Plantation.

On the character of Lorenzo Worthington, Kate Chopin devoted particular care. The reader's interest varies from pity to indignation to sustained amusement as this "unobtrusive, narrow-chested person," with his long thin nose and short-sighted eyes "plunged between the pages of his precious books" worries about the necessity of protecting Emerson, Ruskin, and Schopenhauer "from the Philistine abuse and contempt of his wife" who never failed to declare his ideas were "disjoined," and who "always spoke of her husband present as a husband absent." A peculiarity he patiently endured, "having no talent for repartee, that he had at one time thought of cultivating."

The story is written with a refreshing reserve, and there is a poise in the opening chapters which suggests Constance Fenimore Woolson at her best. Both in style and structure there is a break and a drop toward the end. These are faults of detail. What first novel reveals an author's surest skill and literary cunning? The weird horror of the burning of the mill and the struggle of old Morico to save his wretched son Jocint lack the graphic restraint of Kate Chopin's later writings. David Hosmer, in spite of the evident delight the author had in picturing him, falls just short of being more than a figure in a frame.

One detail of importance in relation to *At Fault* remains in a letter Kate Chopin wrote to a St. Louis newspaper. In a review of her novel the writer for *The Republic* vehemently objected to her use of the word "depot" for a railway station, and the word "store" for shop.

Kate Chopin's dignified reply, sent to the Editor of *The Republic* was printed in the issue of October 19, 1890.

To the Editor of *The Republic.*

St. Louis, Oct. 18.—Will you kindly permit me through the columns of your paper to set *The Republic* book reviewer right in a matter which touches me closely concerning the use and misuse of words? I cannot recall an instance, in or out of fiction, in which an American "country store" has been alluded to as a "shop," unless by some unregenerate Englishman. The use of the word depot or station is optional. Wm. Dean Howells employs the former to indicate a "railway station," so I am hardly ready to believe the value of "At Fault" marred by following so safe a precedent.

Very respectfully yours.

KATE CHOPIN.

This is the only reference Kate Chopin ever made in print to William Dean Howells. Her appreciation and esteem of this distinguished stylist and realist are attested by the number of his novels, comedies, and books of criticism in her library with marginal notes and comments in her handwriting.

Chapter IX

BAYOU FOLK AND OTHER STORIES

KATE CHOPIN'S genius expressed its genuine artistic and literary abilities in the short story. Four St. Louis magazines, *The Spectator,* the *St. Louis Magazine, Fashion and Fancy,* and the *St. Louis Life* gave her a hearing and attracted a group of interested local readers. Her early efforts in writing short stories are to be found in these publications.

The Spectator published a Christmas sketch, "With the Violin," December 6th, 1890. This story written for children has for its elements the inquisitiveness of children and the effect of music. She knew both well. The characters are German-Americans. Papa Konrad tells Sophie, Grissel, and Ernst an episode in his own life. It is important to realize at the start that her cleverest characterizations include other individuals besides the Creoles and Acadians of Louisiana.

Her first Creole short story appeared in *The Youth's Companion,* August 20, 1891. It was written in a day, March 14, 1891, and sent to *The Youth's Companion* March 16th. "For Marse Chouchoute," reprinted in *Bayou Folk,* is a story of faithfulness and sacrifice. Wash, a crippled negro boy whose existence is devotion to Armand Verchette or "Chouchoute," as he is nicknamed, dies after an act of heroism. His one anxiety in death is "Who—gwine—watch—Marse—Chouchoute?" The author's natural story-telling ability and her instinctive delicacy of contrast are the elements that give this story human and dramatic interest.

A sketch that is a glimpse of reality appeared in the *St. Louis Magazine,* September 1891, and may well be reprinted here. Who will disagree with the author's phrase, "Foolish Bruno!"

A HARBINGER

Bruno did very nice work in black and white; sometimes in green and yellow and red. But he never did anything quite so clever as during that summer he spent in the hills.

The spring-time freshness had stayed, someway. And then there was the gentle Diantha, with hair the color of ripe wheat, who posed for him when he wanted. She was as beautiful as a flower, crisp with morning dew. Her violet eyes were baby-eyes—when he first came. When he went away he kissed her, and she turned red and white and trembled. As quick as thought the baby look went out of her eyes and another flashed into them.

Bruno sighed a good deal over his work that winter. The women he painted were all like mountain-flowers. The big city seemed too desolate for endurance often. He tried not to think of sweet-eyed Diantha. But there was nothing to keep him from remembering the hills; the whirr of the summer breeze through delicate-leafed maples; the bird-notes that used to break clear and sharp into the stillness when he and Diantha were together on the wooded hillside.

So when summer came again, Bruno gathered his bags, his brushes and colors and things. He whistled soft low tunes as he did so. He sang even, when he was not lost in wondering if the sunlight would fall just as it did last June, aslant the green slopes; and if—and if Diantha would quiver red and white again when he called her his sweet own Diantha, as he meant to.

Bruno had made his way through a tangle of underbrush; but before he came quite to the wood's edge, he halted: for there about the little church that gleamed white in the sun, people were gathered—old and young. He thought Diantha might be among them, and strained his eyes to see if she were. But she was not. He did see her though—when the doors of the rustic temple swung open—like a white-robed lily now.

There was a man beside her—it mattered not who; enough that it was one who had gathered this wild flower for his own, while Bruno was dreaming. Foolish Bruno! to have been only love's harbinger after all! He turned away. With hurried strides he descended the hill again, to wait by the big water-tank for a train to come along.

"Miss Witherwell's Mistake," a clever and humorous story with excellent character sketching, was printed in *Fashion and Fancy,* December 1891.

Harper's Young Peoples Magazine was the second Eastern publication to accept Kate Chopin's Creole narratives. Two exquisite sketches were published toward the end of 1891. The issue of November 24th contained "A Very Fine Fiddle." Perhaps even more remarkable is the short sketch in the December 8th issue, "Boulôt and Boulotte." Both were included later in her first collection, *Bayou Folk.* "A Very Fine Fiddle" is only a matter of three pages, but who could fail to realize the pathos of its finale? The humor of the situation, the genuineness of the realism in the account of the two children and their new shoes make "Boulôt and Boulotte" delightful. Kate Chopin's children remember a letter of praise sent by William Dean Howells to their mother encouraging her to write more sketches of this kind. Unfortunately the letter has not been preserved.

In November 1891, Kate Chopin sent a one-act comedy, "An Embarrassing Position," to the *New York Herald* for its Dramatic Contest. She had been inspired by her reading of William Dean Howells's farces. "The Sleeping Car," "The Register," "The Elevator," and "The Mouse Trap" not only delighted Kate Chopin, they were the source of suggestion for her own attempt, and with Howells's later comedies, the reading of them remained a lasting pleasure to her keenly appreciative mind. Her gift of mimicry enabled her to read Howells's farces and comedies to her friends with inimitable zest.

"An Embarrassing Position" did not win the *Herald's* approval. *Reedy's Mirror* published it in December, 1895. The comedy presents a social dilemma that needed more subtle skill in characterization than Kate Chopin bestowed upon it. After reading her comedy, the situation, amusing enough, is remembered, not the characters. It holds, however, the reader's attention and interest. It will be found in Part II, pp. 210–222.

The year 1892 gave Kate Chopin the opportunity of revealing her art to a wider circle of readers. Two Boston magazines accepted her work. *Two Tales,* a new venture in short story publications, printed " Love on the Bon Dieu " in the July 23d issue. " At the 'Cadian Ball " appeared October 22d. The well-established *Short Story Magazine* published her only venture into historical fiction, " The Maid of St. Phillippe," in November. " Loka," the story of a half-breed Indian girl and her love for the infant Bibine attracted attention in the December 22d number of *The Youth's Companion.* The *American Press Association* syndicated in December " The Christ Light," a tragic episode in the life of a commonplace Western farmer.

Three times in her career as a writer Kate Chopin had two of her stories printed in the same issue of a publication—twice in magazines, once in a newspaper. In January 1893 she began her long association with *Vogue.* " A Visit to Avoyelles " and " Désirée's Baby " appeared simultaneously in this magazine, January 14, 1893. The latter is one of her great short stories. Perhaps it is one of the world's best short stories. If you read it in *Bayou Folk* you must notice the ending. It is not a " surprise ending "; it is a revelation. Into that one quiet, deft, final sentence is gathered an entire drama.

Désirée is the wife of Armand Aubigny, an " imperious and exacting " Louisiana planter, who had given her his name in spite of the fact that she was only the adopted daughter of one of his neighbors. His impetuous love asked no questions as to her origin or her birth. " When the baby was about three months old, Désirée awoke one day to the conviction that there was something in the air menacing her peace "; mysterious whisperings among the blacks, a change in her husband's manner. Suddenly she sees that her little baby looks like a negro, but her husband, in his wrath, when she asked what it meant, exclaimed:

" It means that the child is not white; it means that you are not white."

Désirée leaves her husband with her child in her arms: " She disappeared among the reeds and willows that grew thick along the banks of the deep, sluggish bayou; and she did not come back again."

A few weeks later Armand burned all his wife's belongings, the costly cradle and the *layette* that had come from Paris. And he burned her letters. In the drawer from which he took Désirée's letters was a remnant of an old letter from his mother to his father, and he caught his own name, Armand, in it. He read:

" But above all," she wrote, " night and day, I thank the good God for having so arranged our lives that our dear Armand will never know that his mother, who adores him, belongs to the race that is cursed with the brand of slavery."

During 1893 Kate Chopin was gratified by the publication of several stories in the staid and illustrious New Orleans newspaper, *The Times-Democrat.* Two short stories that did not deal with the South were printed in April issues. " A Shameful Affair," a story of love and humor, of a haughty maid and an unusual college boy appeared April 9th. " Mrs. Mobry's Reason," a somber, gripping case study of heredity, April 23d.

" Dr. Chevalier's Lie," an actual incident in the life of a physician of New Orleans, was sketched for *Vogue,* October 5, 1893.

DOCTOR CHEVALIER'S LIE

The quick report of a pistol rang through the quiet autumn night. It was no unusual sound in the unsavory quarter where Dr. Chevalier had his office. Screams commonly went with it. This time there had been none.

Midnight had already rung in the old cathedral tower.

The doctor closed the book over which he had lingered so late, and awaited the summons that was almost sure to come.

As he entered the house to which he had been called he could not but note the ghastly sameness of detail that accompanied these oft-recurring events. The same scurrying; the same groups of tawdry, frightened women bending over banisters—hysterical, some of them; morbidly curious, others; and not a few shedding womanly tears; with a dead girl stretched somewhere, as this one was.

And yet it was not the same. Certainly she was dead; there was the hole in the temple where she had sent the bullet through. Yet it was different. Other such faces had been unfamiliar to him, except so far as they bore the common stamp of death. This one was not.

Like a flash he saw it again amid other surroundings. The time was little more than a year ago. The place, a homely cabin down in Arkansas, in which he and a friend had found shelter and hospitality during a hunting expedition.

There were others beside. A little sister or two; a father and mother—coarse, and bent with toil, but proud as archangels of their handsome girl, who was too clever to stay in an Arkansas cabin, and who was going away to seek her fortune in the big city.

"The girl is dead," said Doctor Chevalier. "I knew her well, and charge myself with her remains and decent burial."

The following day he wrote a letter. One, doubtless, to carry sorrow, but no shame to the cabin down there in the forest.

It told that the girl had sickened and died. A lock of hair was sent and other trifles with it. Tender last words were even invented.

Of course it was noised about that Doctor Chevalier had cared for the remains of a woman of doubtful repute.

Shoulders were shrugged. Society thought of cutting him. Society did not, for some reason or other, so the affair blew over.

With the special Christmas issue of December 24, 1893, the *Times-Democrat* began the policy, continued in four years, of featuring one of Kate Chopin's stories in its Christmas edition. "Ma'am Pélagie" (December 24, 1893) is the superb study of a woman's character, a dramatic portrayal of the strange narrow existence of Ma'am Pélagie who lived for a dream in the shadow of her ancestral plantation home—the dream of a rebuilt mansion, Côte Joyeuse. With tenderness and without sentimentality the story reveals the disaster of war and the power of illusion. It is in *Bayou Folk*.

1894 was a year of cordial encouragement for Kate Chopin. Richard Watson Gilder had accepted "A No Account Creole" for the *Century*, "the letter of acceptance abounding in expressions of warmest praise of the story,"[1] that was published in the January number. "Azélie" was in the *Century* for December. Equally gratifying to the author was the welcome extended by the editor of *The Atlantic Monthly* to her story "Tante Cat'rinette." Most satisfying of all that year's surprises was the publication in book form by Houghton Mifflin Co., after the Century Company and Appleton's had refused the manuscript, of a collection of her Creole short stories—*Bayou Folk.* This collection has had four printings: February, 1894, March, 1895, February, 1906, and August, 1911.[2] After the first appearance of these Creole stories curiosity was expressed in many parts of the country to know something about the author of these sketches illustrative of new types of character, the Creoles and the descendants of the old Acadian settlers in and around Natchitoches parish, Louisiana. The question was asked, "Is Kate Chopin an assumed name?" In answer to the question, and to satisfy the curiosity aroused, a portrait of Kate Chopin and an authorized sketch of her life appeared in *St. Louis Life,* June 9, 1894. *Current Literature, Book News,* and other gossipy reviews republished the *St. Louis Life* article. William Schuyler wrote a commendable critical essay for *The Writer,* August 1894.

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[1] *The St. Louis Life*, June 9, 1894, p. 11.

The general reading public, with the more earnest of the contemporary literary reviews, gave the book rare praise. The manner of presentation as well as the material was new. Kate Chopin's "Bayou Folk" live and move in a world all their own. It was a new world to which the reading public was introduced, a little world, it is true, but full of fresh life and interest, which never flags. It is the world of Natchitoches Parish, central Louisiana, drained by the Red River and Cane River and Bayous Saline, Pierre, and Natchez, Boispourri, and Rigolet De Bon Dieu. It is not the literary world of Cable, Grace King, or Molly Moore Davis.

Bayou Folk stories had the advantage of the entire freshness which springs from an unexplored field—the quaint and picturesque life among the Creole and Acadian folk of the

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[2] Letter from Houghton Mifflin Co., Boston, the publishers of *Bayou Folk,* July 22, 1930.

Louisiana bayous. The Acadian land of Louisiana had for many years had a peculiarly romantic interest to all readers of Longfellow's *Evangeline,* as well as to those familiar with the history of the expulsion of the Acadians from their original home when England, victor in the war with France in America, became master of the situation. The exiles from Acadia who were transplanted to Puritan New England, to New York, Pennsylvania, Maryland, Virginia, the Carolinas appear to have been merged in the people;[3] those who found a more congenial resting place among co-religionists and a folk of the same race in Louisiana appear to have been more persistent in the preservation of a type.[4] The Catholic Church never abandoned them. They speak an ancient French of the seventeenth century and an amalgamated English, the literally translated phrases of which are, to the stranger, full of enchanting surprises.[5] The well-educated among them, sons of planters, are graduates of the Jesuit Colleges of Louisiana or of Jefferson College, Convent, Louisiana. But the Creoles of New Orleans, with the Creoles of central Louisiana, call the Acadians "Cajans," disdainfully.

They have the accentuated features of unmixed races. They slightly chant their phrases in agreeable Southern voices. Their Christian names are Evariste, Placide, Numa, Alcée, Artemise, Calixta, Fronie, Ozème, Pélagie, Euphrasie; their best-known family names are quite like Santien, St. Denis Godolph, Laballière, Benitou, Bonamour. They say "raide-rode" for railroad, having settled in Louisiana before "chemin de fer" was known. They say of their Easter communion every year that it is "to make their Easters" because the French is "Faire des Paques." Why they always say "I don't know, me" and "I don't say no, me," instead of " I don't know " and " I don't say no " is a question of euphony. " Je ne sais pas " is too peremptory. They lengthen it with the " moi."[6]

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[3] Documents relating to the attitude of the Atlantic seaboard colonists toward the Acadians may be read in *From Quebec to New Orleans, The Story of the French in America,* by J. H. Schlarman, Belleville, Ill., 1929, pp. 312–328.

[4] Arthur George Doughty, *The Acadian Exiles,* Toronto, 1916, p. 150. This monograph is the best short history of the Acadian people in English.

[5] Alcée Fortier, *The Acadian Language,* PMLA, v. 1, 1886, p. 99.

Kate Chopin's reproduction of their speech is not too elaborate. *Bayou Folk* contains much of that dialect spoken by Acadians and Creoles, which is unlike any other speech in the world. The conversation is not broken or otherwise damaged English. Kate Chopin was discreet enough to give suggestions of the soft, harmonius tongue, a curious clipping and shortening, to which the Bayou Folk have reduced English speech, and not to make a contribution to philology. The dialect is not prominent, is not a product of the author's fancy. It is not a wanton manufacture. It is the actual speech of a people intelligently and intelligibly rendered in all its softness and charm. In her skillful handling, the use of the dialect adds in every case to the interest of the story, instead of detracting from it, as is often the case in dialect literature.

Partly through her remarkable skill with dialect Kate Chopin in *Bayou Folk* gives some very vivid glimpses into a life that seems alien to what passes for modern civilization. Most of the stories which composed the collection had appeared in periodicals. As sometimes happens, her distinctive power was not fully recognized until scattered illustrations of it were brought into a collective whole. *Bayou Folk* is one of those books that the reader of American literature runs across, only to ponder upon the great difference in life, civilization, indeed, in the entire point of view, that may be found in this widely extended nation.

In its three hundred and thirteen pages, *Bayou Folk* contains twenty-three titles—short stories and sketches. Tiny sketches, some of them—like " A Very Fine Fiddle " and " Old Aunt Peggy "—slipped in here and there. Why will not more writers trust the public with the half story they really have to tell instead of " piecing out " with another half of more or less clumsy invention?

The word *vignette* would be an apt characterization of the sketches and of several of the stories. They are neither episodic nor dramatic in the accepted senses of these words; they are extraordinary delicate and human glimpses. "A Very Fine Fiddle" is one of the most quietly moving fragments in modern writing. The entire story "In Sabine," of the rescue of a pretty Acadian wife from a brutal husband, is a glittering weave of humor.

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[6] Alcée Fortier, *The Acadians of Louisiana and Their Dialect,* PMLA, v. 6, no. 1, 64–94, 1891.

The most noticeable feature in these stories or sketches is the author's clear perception of the characteristics of her subject, the good understanding of her people. She seems to have gone straight to the heart of the Natchitoches folk. She has heard their little confidences of joy and grief, and relates them with the directness and naturalness of the finest art. And there is a delicacy of touch, a sureness of handling. In the moderation and economy of expression, in the power only half displayed, there is an almost austere adherence to art. With no affectation of theories, no message to the dissatisfied, no sentimentality, they are only simple stories simply told.

Kate Chopin never gives a mere factual transcription of life; her realism is always poetic realism, in the sense that it does not only reflect, but illuminates the narrowly circumstantial lives she portrays.

Translated into terms of painting, the art in *Bayou Folk* manifests quick, sharp, effective brushwork, lavish color, and effective composition. She has the knack of telling a story, which is not a common gift, but she has with it the touch of an artist so that each little study is perfect and satisfying. She communicates without saying much about it, the charm of the tropical air and the languor and life of the plantation; and her few words of description have an added value from the very fact of her frugal use of them. The strong individuality of these narratives gives impressive testimony to the genius of their author, who with unerring hand produces vivid pictures without wasting a line or misplacing a single stroke of coloring. In them art and truth are blended in a way that make a harmonious whole.

They differ in their subject-matter and points of view but the quality is the same in all. They are full of life, warmth, color, ardor, fire—artistic versions of pathetic, poetic, tragic, heroic, and comic episodes and customs in the lives of her people. The pathos is bred of sympathy. It is not the curious morbid pathos of mental dissection, later to be exhibited in Edna of *The Awakening.* There is tragedy, deftly treated, in "Désirée's Baby"—the tragedy of a home destroyed, a woman's heart broken, a man's pride crushed.

Occasionally, too, as in "Ma'ame Pélagie" or "Beyond the Bayou" or "The Benitou's Slave," far-off echoes from the Civil War may be heard, brief suggestions of that loss of fortune and change in circumstance that have furnished many a writer with an effective motive, but for the most part this is not in the foreground.

The gift of picturesqueness is always subordinated to the human interest, and is scarcely exercised at all in some of the stories where, as in "A Wizard from Gettysburg," the dramatic movement is rapid. Here the pathos is genuine, the feeling deep—despite the fact that one has wandered out of the sunlight of fact into the shadows of a land of romance. In a few phrases or a brief dialogue are disclosed the fire, passion, and delicate sensibilities of loving hearts and chivalrous souls—particularly in "A Gentleman of Bayou Têche" and "A Lady of Bayou St. John."

Writing, to Kate Chopin, was spontaneous. Her short stories were published for the most part in their original form. Their shapeliness or semblance of shapeliness was what her mind gave them and her pen put down without revision. Her success as a writer of short stories is a quaint ironic comment on the whole subject of literary modes and the short-story art. In style and design her writing is not art that conceals art. It is spontaneous success. Without any of the tricks of style she achieves the effect of style through simplicity and deftness.

The universal appeal of her motives, the tenderness and depth of her varied sympathy, the strength of her dramatic expertness, the intense aliveness of even her insignificant characters, the spontaneous humor, and the art of prose in her writing as a whole assure the lasting importance and significance of Kate Chopin's *Bayou Folk.*

Chapter X

LITERARY COMMENTS AND CRITICAL OPINIONS

DURING the years between *Bayou Folk* and the publication of her second collection of short stories, *A Night in Acadie* in 1897, Kate Chopin's life was in no way different from what it had been before literary success brought her from local to national prominence. She never cared to be interviewed and refused to be considered a literary person. She preferred her few congenial intimate friends and the companionship of young people to inquisitive admirers. The account of " Tante Elodie " in the first paragraph of her story " The Godmother " applies as well to Kate Chopin.[1] " Tante Elodie attracted youth in some incomprehensible way. It was seldom there was not a group of young people gathered about her fire in winter or sitting about her in summer." One of this group has written to me of her preferences: " Kate Chopin loved cards, coffee, and a cigarette."

Occasional visits were made to Louisiana for rest or pleasure. She found both with her relatives there, particularly on the plantation home of Mr. and Mrs. Lamy Chopin, Sr., who had visited her in St. Louis on their way to the Chicago World's Fair, where, to the delight of Lamy Chopin, very little excitement was aroused by the exhibition of the supposed cabin of " Uncle Tom."

In her literary work between 1894 and 1897 two features are noticeable. In the first place, there is in her writings a freer and more detailed intimacy of expression in conveying the moods and subtleties of passionate natures. In the second place, she wrote personal essays that express in a critical way her literary appreciations or asperities.

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[1] " The Godmother " is reprinted in Part II, pp. 274–295.

A surprising criticism of the Western Association of Writers appeared in *The Critic,* July 7, 1894. Kate Chopin, the author of the article, wrote unkindly and bitterly of the group that met every year at Spring Fountain Park, Indiana. With vehemence and some truth she called the Western Association of Writers "provincial," declaring they possessed "a singular ignorance of, or disregard for, the value of the highest art forms," and were not students of "true life and true art."

James Whitcomb Riley belonged to the Association. Particularly on his account, Kate Chopin's criticism was resented. Echoes of the prepared statement of counter resentment were heard even in such unexpected places as the *Cincinnati Commercial Gazette,* July 28, 1894, and the *Minneapolis Journal,* July 21, 1894. The article against the Western Association was Kate Chopin's first venture in criticism, and it was unfortunate. Later in the same year more expert articles appeared in the *St. Louis Life* without the antagonistic spirit of the first slight essay. Fairness, restraint, discrimination, and a touch of humor characterized her criticism of Hamlin Garland's *Crumbling Idols,* in *St. Louis Life,* October 6, 1894.

CRUMBLING IDOLS

Mr. Garland seems not content that the idols whereof he speaks are crumbling. He attempts to hasten their demolition with hammer-strokes that resound and make much noise, even if they accomplish nothing in that work of destruction which moves too slowly for his impatient humor.

In these twelve essays on art, however, the author has sounded a true note if not a new one, which would be more forcible were it less insistent; which would ring clearer were it not accompanied by a clamor and bluster often distressing to sensitive ears. He suggests—what no one who has thought upon the subject is ready to dispute—that the youthful artist should free himself from the hold of conventionalism; that he should go direct to those puissant sources, Life and Nature, for inspiration and turn his back upon models furnished by man; in a word, that he should be creative and not imitative. But Mr. Garland undervalues the importance of the past in art and exaggerates the significance of the present.

Human impulses do not change and can not so long as men and women continue to stand in the relation to one another which they have occupied since our knowledge of their existence began. It is why Aeschylus is true, and Shakespeare is true to-day, and why Ibsen will not be true in some remote to-morrow, however forcible and representative he may be for the hour, because he takes for his themes social problems which by their very nature are mutable. And, notwithstanding Mr. Garland's opinion to the contrary, social problems, social environments, local color and the rest of it are not of themselves motives to insure the survival of a writer who employs them.

The author of *Crumbling Idols* would even lightly dismiss from the artist's consideration such primitive passions as love, hate, etc. He declares that in real life people do not talk love. How does he know? I feel very sorry for Mr. Garland.

An excellent chapter in the book deals with impressionism in painting. It will be found interesting and even instructive to many who have rather vague and confused notions of what impressionism means. Mr. Garland has gone over heart and soul to the Impressionists. He feels and sees with them; being in close sympathy with their individualism; their abandonment of the traditional and conventional in the interest of "truth." He admits that he himself has discovered certain "purple shadows" by looking at a stretch of sand, with his head turned top-side down! It is doubtful if many of us would exhibit an equal zeal in pursuing anything so elusive as a shadow; but the incident goes to prove Mr. Garland's earnestness and sincerity of purpose.

His attitude in regard to the East as a literary center is to be deplored; and his expressions in that respect seem exaggerated and uncalled for. The fact remains that Chicago is not yet a literary center, nor is St. Louis (!), nor San Francisco, nor Denver, nor any of those towns in whose behalf he drops into prophecy. There can no good come of abusing Boston and New York. On the contrary, as "literary centers" they have rendered incalculable service to the reading world by bringing to light whatever there has been produced of force and originality in the West and South since the war.

The book is one which all Western art lovers should read. Mr. Garland is surely a representative Western man of letters. He is too young to assume the role of prophet becomingly; and he somehow gives the impression of a man who has not yet "lived," but he is vigorous and sincere, and he is one of us.

She loved the theater and cherished her memories of the magnetic power of the stage. Her remarks against the publication of a selection of Edwin Booth's letters are written with the intensity of a friend who reverenced the high art of the actor, *St. Louis Life,* October 13, 1894.

THE REAL EDWIN BOOTH

The October *Century* opens with a selection of private letters of the late Edwin Booth, preceded by a brief preface from his daughter, Mrs. Grossman. The article bears the title, "The Real Edwin Booth," and forms part of a collection to be published later in book form.

If Booth were able to-day to take up the magazine and re-read these letters, never intended for the public eye, it is easy to fancy him quoting from one of them, "I shrink from the indelicacy."

Never has the world known a man more wrapped about in a mantle of sensitiveness and reserve than was Edwin Booth; and it seems a pity that in his case the public might not have respected the mute appeal for privacy which his whole existence expressed.

Judging from the selection before us one can hardly hope that these letters will throw any new light upon the man's relation to his life work—which could give some excuse for their being, so far as the public is concerned. They simply show us a man who seems fond of his daughter and of his friends; they lay bare the poignant sorrow of a husband for the loss of a well-beloved wife; they indicate that he possessed some heart, so far as the written word can represent so abstract a thing as a human heart; and they evince little or no power of mind or depth of character. No, it is not here that we are to look for the real Edwin Booth, in a puerile collection of letters, expressions wrung from him by the conventional demands of his daily life.

The real Edwin Booth gave himself to the public through his art. Those of us who most felt its magnetic power are the ones who knew him best, and as he would have wished to be known. His art was his closest and most precious possession. Through it he was great, he was individual, he was a force that appealed to and acted upon the finer responsive chords of every human intelligence that heard him. It was the medium through which he expressed himself. He possessed no other form of expression by which to make himself known.

If he might to-day turn over the leaves of this collection of letters, it would surely be with the sad, " pale smile " which we all remember, and no doubt with a spoken reproach to all of us—public, daughter and publishers: " Why look you, how unworthy a thing you make of me."

More penetrating and valuable for its insistence on standards in literary art is her lengthier essay in the *St. Louis Life,* November 17, 1894, on the art of Zola.

EMILE ZOLA'S *LOURDES*

I once heard a devotee of impressionism admit, in looking at a picture by Monet, that, while he himself had never seen in nature the peculiar yellows and reds therein depicted, he was convinced that Monet had painted them because he saw them and because they were true. With something of a kindred faith in the sincerity of all Mons. Zola's work, I am yet not at all times ready to admit its truth, which is only equivalent to saying that our points of view differ, that truth rests upon a shifting basis and is apt to be kaleidoscopic.

" Lourdes " seems to me to be a mistake, not in its conception, but in its treatment. It cannot be called a failure, because Mons. Zola has not failed in his intention to give to the world an exhaustive history of Bernadette's Lourdes. But that history could have been as direct, and surely more effective, had it been made subordinate to some powerful narrative, such as Mons. Zola is so well able to invent.

As it is, the story is the merest thread of a story running loosely through the 400 pages, and more than two-thirds of the time swamped beneath a mass of prosaic data, offensive and nauseous description and rampant sentimentality.

In no former work has Mons. Zola so glaringly revealed his constructive methods. Not for an instant, from first to last, do we lose sight of the author and his note-book and of the disagreeable fact that his design is to instruct us. Pierre, the hero of the book, seems to be also the victim, the passive medium chosen by the author to convey information to his readers. This young man (an unbeliever) is inspired with an inordinate tenderness for the memory of Bernadette, solely that he may chance to be carrying her history in his coat pocket that he may read it to the pilgrims journeying on the "white train" towards Lourdes, and that the reader may in this way become acquainted with it himself. Once at Lourdes, the movements of this young priest come to be looked upon by the reader with uneasiness and misgiving. If he happen to walk abroad, we need not suppose it is to take the air, or that it is for any other purpose than to be waylaid by one of the many individuals who seem to swarm in Lourdes, ever on the watch for willing ears in which to empty the overflowing vials of their information. If he sits for a moment contemplative before the Grotto, the insidious man of knowledge is soon there beside him, conveying to him by pages and pages information which we know that Mons. Zola acquired in the same way and thus subtly conveys to us.

We are told that Pierre goes to the barber's to be shaved, but we know better by this time; we know that he goes for some other purpose, which soon reveals itself when the intelligent barber tells in round terms what he thinks of certain clerical abuses prevailing at Lourdes, and we are certain that we are hearing what the author himself thinks of those things. Such handling of a subject is unpardonable in Mons. Zola.

The style all through, however, is masterly, and there are descriptive bits which are superb, notably the description of a candle-light procession winding its tortuous way in and out among the hills: "Au ciel, it semblait y avoir moins d'étoiles. Une voie lactée était tombée de là-haut, roulant son poudroiement de mondes, et qui continuait sur la terre la ronde des astres."

Very powerfully conceived and described is the scene before the Grotto, leading up to Marie Guersaint's remarkable cure. The writer here touches a fine psychological point, though not a new one—the possibility of the combined will-power of a mass of humanity forcing nature to subserve its ends. A French savant has already reminded us that "the psychology of a multitude of men is not the psychology of the individual." The subject is attractive, and Mons. Zola might have made more of it. . . .

But the book will doubtless thrust him a step further away from the goal of his hopes and ambitions—the French Academy.

It is hard to understand in Mons. Zola this persistent desire to be admitted to the Academy. One would suppose he would be content, even proud, to stand outside of its doors in the company of Alphonse Daudet.

The early months of 1897 were made interesting for Kate Chopin by an offer from George L. Davidson, editor of the St. Louis *Criterion,* to write a column of personal comment for that magazine. In her second *As You Like It* article, February 20, 1897, she gave a cheerful explanation of her purposes in these happy comments on life and literature:

> The courteous editor of *The Criterion,* obeying some misguided impulse, has kindly placed at my disposal a couple of columns of this entertaining journal, in which to exploit my opinions upon books and writers, and matters and things pertaining thereto.
>
> The mistake which the editor of *The Criterion* made was in not giving an imperative command. When a person is politely offered *carte blanche* to discourse upon " matters and things," that person is going to talk about herself and her own small doings, unless she is old enough to know better. One must be very old indeed to be old enough to know better.
>
> A second mistake—if I may be permitted to mention mistakes and the editor of *The Criterion* in the same breath—a second mistake was in supposing that I had any opinions. Very long ago I could do nothing with them; nobody wanted them; they were not self-supporting, and perished of inanition. Since then I have sometimes thought of cultivating a few—a batch of sound, marketable opinions, in anticipation of just such an emergency, but I neglected to do so. Of course there are such things as transplanted opinions; then one may know them, even steal them; there are lots of ways; but what is the use? I did not tell all this to the editor of the *Criterion* beforehand, because I might have lost the opportunity of telling it to the public.

She did not " talk about herself "; she talked about editors, and youth, and her reminiscences.

She wrote her " opinions " of Alexander Kielland's short stories, of Ruth McEnery Stuart, of Thomas Hardy, and of Joel Chandler Harris.

Her comments on "editors" in the *Criterion,* March 20, 1897, were written after reading a book of memoirs written by Mrs. James Mackin, whom she had known as a girl.

In St. Louis this book *A Society Woman On Two Continents* occasioned a mild surprise. Kate Chopin wrote:

A good many of us who were alive back in the seventies are wondering why under the canopy Mrs. Mackin, or "Salie Britton" as we all remember her, should have written her memoirs. Though for my part I find it quite natural that a woman should want to write her memoirs, and enjoy doing so; even a common, every-day person, let alone "A Society Woman on Two Continents."

When I learned, a week or two ago, that Sallie, who was my contemporary, had been writing memoirs, I was seized with an insane desire to do likewise. I remembered how she used to come up on 8th Street from her home around on Chouteau to ask my mother's permission for me to stay all night with her. A request which was never granted, because Sallie was not a Catholic! And to-day, here she is, not only a Catholic, but actually receiving a golden rose from the Pope! While I—Well, I doubt if the Holy Father had ever heard of me, or if he would give me a golden rose if he had.

Speaking of editors—though I don't know that I was speaking of them. I must have been thinking of them in connection with Sallie Britton's memoirs, and wondering whether she ever "submitted" them for publication, or how she did it. But editors are really a singular class of men; they have such strange and incomprehensible ways with them.

I once submitted a story to a prominent New York editor, who returned it promptly with the observation that "the public is getting very tired of that sort of thing." I felt very sorry for the public; but I wasn't willing to take one man's word for it, so I clapped the offensive document into an envelope and sent it away again—this time to a well-known Boston editor.

"I am delighted with the story," read the letter of acceptance, which came a few weeks later, "and so, I am sure, will be our readers." (!)

When an editor says a thing like that it is at his own peril. I at once sent him another tale, thinking thereby to increase his delight and add to it ten-fold.

"Can you call this a story, dear madam?" he asked when he sent it back. "Really, there seems to me to be no story at all; what is it all about?" I could see his pale smile.

It was getting interesting, like playing at battledore and shuttlecock. Off went the would-be story by the next mail to the New York editor—the one who so considerately gauged the ennui of the public.

"It is a clever and excellent piece of work," he wrote me; "the story is well told." I wonder if the editor, the writer, and the public are ever at one.

What she thought about youth in school trying to write assigned compositions, or what she preferred to say to youth about books "withheld from their perusal" is valuable in both instances, as her comments in the *Criterion* of February 13, 1897, indicate her manner of talking to her own children.

I have a young friend who occasionally drops in on his way from school to toast his feet before my sitting-room fire. He startled me one time by asking me abruptly to give him a subject for an essay. I was standing at the window looking at a man shoveling coal across the street. I like to look out of the window; there is a good deal of unadulterated human nature that passes along during the length of a day. Of course I do not live in Westmoreland Place. At the mention of "essay," I turned with some interest and went to join him at the fireside. "A subject, my dear! That is not so very easy to think of on the spur of the moment. But whatever you do let it be original. Give your own impressions, for goodness sake! However lame or poor, they ought to be of more value than any second-hand material you may chance to gather."

"I know what you mean," he replied; "but that isn't what *they* want."

"Well, I suppose you know what they want better than I do;" so we talked of other things. The subject which he chose was either "The Condition of Our Army" or "Naval Resources in the Event of War with Spain." I don't know which. He is just seventeen, a "game," plucky boy in a stand-up fight, I am told. But I doubt if his combative experiences have qualified him to discourse knowledge upon the subject of "Standing Armies," and I am quite sure his nautical impressions have been gathered at

Crève Coeur Lake. But, as he said, he knew what they wanted, and he gave it to them.

It was only the other day that the same very young firiend wanted me to suggest a title for an oration. It was a positive shock to me.

"An oration!" I cried. "Good heavens! Call it something else."

"Can't call it anything else; got to call it an 'oration'; that's what it is."

"But, my child, I know less, much less, about the nature of an oration than does the cook down in the kitchen."

"Oh, the oration's written all right; got it here in my pocket. What I want is a title for it."

It has been many a long day since I listened to an oration. The last one, I think, was from Archbishop Ryan, who was then "Father Ryan," and pastor of Annunciation Church, on Sixth Street. It was an imposing piece of work, but at this late day I forget what it was all about. Naturally I was rather curious to hear what my young companion had written, and with a pretty reluctance he drew a few folded sheets from his pocket and began to read. The paper was short, in which respect it was an improvement upon former orations which I had listened to. It was delicious to hear the roll of his sentences and the thunder of his climaxes. He had caught the very essence and spirit of the thing. It was a good composition, and I told him so. But there was no truth in it from beginning to end, and I told him so.

"It's all right for you to roast orations," he said, a little nettled, putting the paper back in his pocket. "But I tell you what, they're a mighty good thing; it teaches a fellow to stand up and talk and say what he's got to say. It's a mighty good thing for a fellow that's going to be a lawyer."

"So you're going to be a lawyer?" I laughed. "Then I'll have to like you all I can now, for I shan't like you when you're a lawyer."

"Don't you like lawyers?"

"No."

"Why?"

"Oh, I don't know. Maybe because they're given over to orations. I can't say just why."

"What do you like?"

"Well, I think a poet's rather a likeable sort of a person."

"Pshaw! You know I can't write poetry."

"I didn't say anything about writing poetry. Then the philosopher isn't bad at times."

"Philosopher! What good is philosophy when a fellow wants to get on in the world and make a living and make a mark?"

"I wasn't talking about the successful person; I was talking about the person I like. Then there's the loafer. Sometimes I've discovered a charming companion in a loafer."

"Oh, I see you're roasting me. Well, I'm not a poet or a philosopher, and, thank heavens, I ain't a loafer."

"But you are all three, my dear, and that's why I like you. Do you know what illusions are?"

"Let's see. An illusion is when—"

"No, you don't. We never know what illusions are till we have lost them. They belong to youth, and they are poetry and philosophy, and vagabondage, and everything delightful. And they last till men and the world, life and the institutions, come along with—but gracious! I forgot whom I was talk to. Run on and get your skates. I hear there's great sport out at Forest Park."

Jude the Obscure was the starting point for an honest exposition of her way, as a mother, in talking to her children about books and reading, in the *Criterion,* March 13, 1897. Not only are her remarks on Hardy's novel sagacious; her ideas about the lack of interest the book has for intelligent youth are far from being obscure.

A while ago there was lying upon my table a book, which for some inscrutable reason has been withdrawn, I am told, from circulation at our libraries. The spectacle of this book lying in evidence communicated a severe shock to the susceptibilities of a woman who was calling upon me.

"Oh! how can you!" she exclaimed, "with so many young people about!"

The question of how much or how little knowledge of life should be withheld from the youthful mind is one which need only be touched upon here. It is a subject about which there exists a diversity of opinion with the conservative element, no doubt, greatly in preponderance. As a rule the youthful, untrained nature is left to gather wisdom as it comes along in a thousand-and-one ways and in whatever form it may present itself to the intelligent, the susceptible, the observant. In this respect experience is perhaps an abler instructor than direct enlightenment from man or woman; for it works by suggestion. There are many phases and features of life which cannot, or rather should not be expounded, demonstrated, presented to the youthful imagination as cold facts, for it is safe to assert they are not going to be accepted as such. It is moreover robbing youth of its privilege to gather wisdom as the bee gathers honey.

The book referred to a moment ago is a ponderous and formidable looking affair at best. There is nothing alluring in its title or in its sombre black binding. It has the outward appearance of a Congressional Record, and it might easily have escaped the attention of the young person if some reviewers, a few gossips and the libraries had seen fit to let it work out its own damnation. I read the book and then I laid in upon the table.

"Any good?" asked one or two youngsters who have a propensity for getting at the inside of an interesting novel.

"Unutterably tiresome," I said, "but you might like it."

"Oh! thank you."

So there it remained unmolested till the reviewers and others began to get in their work. Then a sudden interest in that volume awoke among people I knew, moving them to borrow; and the young folks began to pick it up and turn it over, in some instances attempting to read it. If any one of them succeeded in reading it from start to finish (which I believe is not the case) he is to be congratulated upon the achievement of having surmounted obstacles the like of which have never before confronted the seeker after entertainment.

From beginning to end there is not a gleam of humor in the book. From beginning to end there is not a line, a thought, a suggestion which could be called seductive. Its brutality is an obvious and unhappy imitation of the great French realist. The characters are so plainly constructed with the intention of illustrating the purposes of the author, that they do not for a moment convey any impression of reality. A gloom which is never lightened pervades the pages. The art is so poor that scenes intended to be impressive are at best but grotesque. The whole exposition is colorless. The hero arouses so little sympathy that at the close one does not care whether he lives or dies; he might be put upon the rack and submitted to unspeakable torture, and I am sure nobody would object; for no one minds much about the spilling of sawdust or the wrenching of rubber joints! A villainous brute of a woman commits deeds that ought by right (if the author knows his craft) to make the hair of the person who reads of them stand on end; but somehow they don't. You will just keep on munching a cream chocolate, or wondering if the postman had gone by, or if there is coal on the furnace.

The book is detestably bad; it is unpardonably dull; and immoral, chiefly because it is not true.

It seems rather irrelevant and late in the day to say all this about *Jude the Obscure*. It is only sympathy for the young person which moves me to do so. I hate to know that deceptions are being practised upon him. He has been led to believe that the work is dangerous and alluring. Failing to obtain it at the libraries he is quite convinced that it is pernicious and altogether delightful, whereupon he hurries, in some instances, to the nearest book store and spends his week's allowance in procuring it. I feel very sorry to think that he should part with so many good silver quarters and receive nothing in return but disappointment and disillusion.

After all, that investigating spirit in the young person is in no sense peculiar, or is it to be wondered at or condemned. It is a characteristic shared in common with the rest of the human race, to seek to unravel mysteries and things hidden and denied. There are the scientists, probing the heavens for its secrets, delving in the depths of the earth for what they may discover. And what about explorers, Theosophists, Hoodoos?

I should like to say to the young people that books which are withheld from their perusal are usually not worth reading. They are not worth bothering about or going to any trouble or expense to obtain. If they are written by thoughtful men, they are not addressed to the youthful imagination and are not fashioned to be comprehended by such. If they are written by other than thoughtful people, there is apt to be no truth in them, and they cannot appeal to lovers of sincerity of any age or condition.

I once knew a very young person who, while rummaging in a bureau drawer discovered a volume secreted in its disordered profundity. The book was obviously in hiding, and no other than she herself was the important personage from whom it was being hidden! She at once locked the door, abstracted the volume, and sat herself down to its perusal. Expectation was rampant within her. She had been scenting mysteries in the air, and the hour of illumination was at hand! The book was something obscure, metaphysical, hysterical. It was dull reading, but she persevered. She would greatly rather have been up in the attic reading Ivanhoe. But no one had hidden Ivanhoe in the far depths of a bureau drawer—*Voila!*

Her critical review of Joel Chandler Harris's *Sister Jane* in the *Criterion,* March 27, 1897, reveals a discriminating understanding of the powers and limitations of his originality and genius.

Sister Jane is a story which has come perilously near being ruined by a plot. It is astonishing that Mr. Harris has not discovered at this late day that he has nothing to do with clap-trap. It doubtless often happens that a writer, when he happens to be a man of genius, is unconscious of his own power. His work is so wholly the result of impulse, so natural an expression of himself, that he accepts it as a matter of course, along with other spiritual or physical phenomena of his being. So, on the other hand, is he unable to realize his limitations, or to recognize the extent of his failure when he adopts an external suggestion and tries to make it his own.

In *Sister Jane* Mr. Harris has given us another confirmation of his genius; not alone by what he has done, but as well by that which he has failed to accomplish. If he were not a genius—if he were simply a clever craftsman—he might have taken that lamentable plot and made something of it. A child is stolen; a child who exists for no other reason than to be stolen. He is spirited away for purposes of revenge by a man created for that special role of abduction. There is a hypocritical villain, the father of an illegitimate child, who is talked about all through the book, yet whose acquaintance we make only in the final pages. There is everything weak, unjointed, melodramatic about the plot. Absurdities accumulate and grow into a tower of folly which should be an everlasting reproach. Pages might be written concerning Mr. Harris' mistake in this direction. But it is pleasanter to talk of Mr. Harris' achievements in *Sister Jane.*

A singular feature about the book is that the real characters in it have absolutely nothing to do with the furtherance of the plot; they are the author's own, and every one of them is a masterpiece of his creative genius. Sister Jane herself; William Warnum, who tells the story; Mrs. Bishears, Mandy, Jincy Meadows, Brother Cosby and Grandsir Roach, Free Betsey and the two old demented sisters; the baby Klibs and even the negro Mose, are people who will live so long as creatures of the imagination continue to haunt our fancy.

There are chapters in *Sister Jane* that stand out like flaming torches. "Free Betsey Runs the Cards" is a gem; as well as "Two Old Friends and Another." "Jincy in the New Ground" is a little bit of fiction whose poetry and poignant charm Mr. Harris himself has never surpassed.

Mr. Harris is not a novelist. He has not the constructive faculty that goes to the making of even the mediocre novel; while he lacks the "vision" which gives us the great novel. But he has the quaint and fanciful imagination of the poet; he has the power to depict character in its outward manifestations, unsurpassed by any American writer of the present day and equalled by few.

Let us hope that he will tell us more of those old-time people in their quiet, sleepy corner of Middle Georgia. We shall not demand a plot; just a record of their plain and simple lives is all we want.

To Ruth McEnery Stuart, whose work is full of the traits recognized as belonging to the modern plantation tradition of American literature, Kate Chopin gave unstinted praise and an almost affectionate admiration. Kate Chopin was not in the habit of expressing such warmth of feeling. In the *Criterion,* February 27, 1897, she wrote:

Several years ago I read in *Lippincott's Magazine* a story by Ruth McEnery Stuart, entitled "Carlotta's Intended." It was the novelette of the number, a tale of such marked excellence that it left an impression upon my mind which has never been disturbed. The character, the dialect of the "dagoes" with whom it deals, and of the Irish cobbler who plays so important a role, are singularly true to nature. Their fidelity must appear striking to anyone who has lived in New Orleans in familiar touch with the life which the author so graphically depicts in this story.

Since then I have read Mrs. Stuart's stories, as they frequently appeared in the magazines, and I have never failed to find the same wholesome, human note sounding through and through them. Mrs. Stuart's work deals mainly with the negroes and "poor whites" of Louisiana, her native state.

Her humor is rich and plentiful, with nothing finical or feminine about it. Few of our women writers have equalled her in this respect. Even Page and Harris among the men have not surpassed her in the portrayal of that child-like exuberance which is so pronounced a feature of negro character, and which has furnished so much that is deliciously humorous and pathetic to our recent literature.

I had sometimes thought that if ever I met Mrs. Stuart I would talk to her about her stories. I would seek a further acquaintance with sweet Carlotta; with some of the whole-souled darkies; above all, with that delightful "Sonny," whom we have recently come to know through the pages of the *Century Magazine.* I have met Mrs. Stuart, and did not speak of her stories.

It was a week or two ago—maybe longer—at all events the morning of the big snow, that I went to call upon her out in the suburbs, where she was visiting with friends. There was something peculiarly beautiful about that one day's snow. There was so much of it; an abundance so thick, soft, clinging, that for three hours or more the world seemed transformed into fairyland. People moved noiselessly along like dream-figures. There was no rumble of wheel or beat of hoof as carriages rolled by; a spell of silence had fallen upon the earth during the night. A spell of peace, too, and quietude which the silent, white snow brings, and which I would have liked to hold and cling to—till the snow melted anyway.

But there was present with me the disturbing anticipation of meeting an unfamiliar personality—a celebrity, moreover. I had met a few celebrities, and they had never failed to depress me.

There is no question about Mrs. Stuart being a celebrity. Her achievements have entitled her to that distinction, and as such she is recognized throughout the length and breadth of these United States—everywhere, except in one small parish in Louisiana. I am quite sure that when Mrs. Stuart occasionally wanders back to *Les Avoyelles* there comes sauntering up to her some black wench or other, who accosts her with:

"G'long Mis' Ruth! you knows des well as me, we all colo'ed people we don' talk dat away lack you makes us talk in yo' books!" And I am greatly mistaken in this guess work if some old chap from Bayou de Glaize hasn't said more than once, "Hit seems Ruth MicHenry's took to writin' books. But land! they aint like no books I ever seen! Thes about common eve'y day talk an' people!" In short, Mrs. Stuart is a prophet outside of *Les Avoyelles*.

But pshaw! I should have known better than to have been bothered at the thought of meeting her. I might have known that a woman possessing so great an abundance of saving grace—which is humor—was not going to take herself seriously, or to imagine for a moment that I intended to take her seriously.

Mrs. Stuart is not one whose work overshadows her personality. That—I subsequently discovered in thinking the matter over—was the reason I failed to speak to her of her stories—possibly failed to think of them while in her presence. Her voice in conversation (I did not hear her read) has a melting quality that penetrates the senses, as some soothing ointment goes through the skin. Her eyes do the rest—complete the charm begun by voice, expression, and a thoroughly natural sympathetic manner. Sympathy and insight are the qualities, I believe, which make her stories lovable, which makes them linger in the memory like pleasant human experiences—happy realities that we are loath to part with. I fancy there are no sharp edges to this woman's soul, no unsheathed prejudices dwelling therein wherewith to inflict wound, or prick, or stab.

Mrs. Stuart, in fact, is a delightful womanly woman. I just wanted to sit there beside her all the rest of the day, while the snow melted out of doors and the world waked up from its fantastic, voiceless snow-dream. I know she would not have bored me the whole day long. I know she does not inflict the penalty of speech upon sympathetic companionship. Failing in this desire, I should have liked to spirit Mrs. Stuart away—out through a window or a defenseless back door. I wanted to take her up and set her down beside my sitting-room fire; to lock the door against receptions, luncheons, and the clamor of many voices. I would have had her sleep and rest there for a week, for a month, for a year!

But I could do nothing of all this. I could only carry away with me her sweet voice and the memory of a captivating presence, which lingered with me the whole day like the echo of some delicious strain of music that one cannot and would not banish.

This may be all wrong. If it is, I trust Mrs. Stuart herself will set me right. But for this once I should hate to be wrong.

On the engrossing subject of the "modern" writer of 1897, Kate Chopin had a word to say in her last article in the *Criterion,* March 27, 1897.

These "As You Like it"[1] articles are of value as indicative of the mind and opinions of a writer who seldom took the world of her readers into her confidence. Kate Chopin disliked and distrusted many things in life and thought, but nothing more than self-display, even of the harmless sort untainted by vanity.

Hidden away in the anonymous columns of the Contributors' Club of *The Atlantic Monthly* for January 1899, Kate Chopin's last critical essay to reach print has the attractive title, "In the Confidence of a Story-Writer."[2]

IN THE CONFIDENCE OF A STORY–WRITER

There is registered somewhere in my consciousness a vow that I will never be confidential except for the purpose of misleading. But consistency is a pompous and wearisome burden, and I seek relief by casting it aside; for, like the colored gentleman in the Passemala, I am sometimes "afraid o' myse'f," but never ashamed.

I have discovered my limitations, and I have saved myself much worry and torment by accepting them as final. I can gain nothing but tribulation by cultivating faculties that are not my own. I cannot reach anything by running after it, but I find that many pleasant and profitable things come to me here in my corner.

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[1] A word about the magazine in which her comments appeared may be of interest. The *St. Louis Criterion* descended from the *St. Louis Life* in this manner: The first number of *St. Louis Life* appeared December 14, 1889, with Mrs. S. V, Moore editor and publisher, until January 4, 1896. Mr. A. Stuart Appleton was editor from January 11, 1896 to February 15 of the same year. Mr. William Winslow Hoxton edited the issues from February 22 to March 14, 1896. Mr. G. L. Davidson became editor March 21, 1893, and changed the title to the *St. Louis Criterion,* September 5, 1896. After August 21, 1897, the office of editor was moved to New York and the magazine was no longer published in St. Louis.

[2] From her notebook it is evident that this essay was written September 1896.

Some wise man has promulgated an eleventh commandment, " Thou shalt not preach," which, interpreted, means, " Thou shalt not instruct thy neighbor as to what he should do." But the Preacher is always with us. Said one to me: " Thou shalt parcel off thy day into mathematical sections. So many hours shalt thou abandon thyself to thought, so many to writing; a certain number shalt thou devote to household duties, to social enjoyment, to ministering to thy afflicted fellow creatures." I listened to the voice of the Preacher, and the result was stagnation all along the line of " hours " and unspeakable bitterness of spirit. In brutal revolt I turned to and played solitaire during my " thinking hour," and whist when I should have been administering to the afflicted. I scribbled a little during my " social enjoyment " period, and shattered the " household duties " into fragments of every conceivable fraction of time, with which I besprinkled the entire day as from a pepper-box. In this way I succeeded in re-establishing the harmonious discord and confusion which had surrounded me before I listened to the voice, and which seems necessary to my physical and mental well-being.

But there are many voices preaching. Said another one to me: " Go forth and gather wisdom in the intellectual atmosphere of clubs,—in those centres of thought where questions are debated and knowledge is disseminated." Once more giving heed, I hurried to enroll myself among the thinkers, and dispensers of knowledge, and propounders of questions. And very much out of place did I feel in these intellectual gatherings. I escaped by some pretext, and regained my corner, where no " questions " and no fine language can reach me.

There is far too much gratuitous advice bandied about, regardless of personal aptitude and wholly confusing to the individual point of view.

I had heard so often reiterated that " genius is a capactiy for taking pains " that the axiom had become lodged in my brain with the fixedness of a fundamental truth. I had never hoped or aspired to be a genius. But one day the thought occurred to me, " I will take pains." Thereupon I proceeded to lie awake at night plotting a tale that should convince my limited circle of readers that I could rise above the commonplace. As to choice of " time," the present century offered too prosaic a setting for a tale intended to stir the heart and the imagination. I selected the last century. It is true I know little of the last century, and have a feeble imagination. I read volumes bearing upon the history of the times and people that I proposed to manipulate, and pored over folios depicting costumes and household utensils then in use, determined to avoid inaccuracy. For the first time in my life I took notes,—copious notes—and carried them bulging in my jacket pockets, until I felt as if I were wearing Zola's coat. I have never seen a craftsman at work upon a fine piece of mosaic, but I fancy that he must handle the delicate bits much as I handled the words in that story, picking, selecting, grouping, with an eye to color and artistic effect,—never satisfied. The story completed, I was very, very weary; but I had the satisfaction of feeling that for once in my life I had worked hard, I had achieved something great, I had taken pains.

But the story failed to arouse enthusiasm among the editors. It is at present lying in my desk. Even my best friend declined to listen to it, when I offered to read it to her.

I am more than ever convinced that a writer should be content to use his own faculty, whether it be a faculty for taking pains or a faculty for reaching his effects by the most careless methods. Every writer, I fancy, has his group of readers who understand, who are in sympathy with his thoughts or impressions or whatever he gives them. And he who is content to reach his own group, without ambition to be heard beyond it, attains, in my opinion, somewhat to the dignity of a philosopher.

The final paragraph of this essay is a revelation of her attitude toward her own work, a reflection of her ambition, and an expression of her philosophy.

Chapter XI

A NIGHT IN ACADIE

CRITICISM was only a passing phase. Her short stories continued to be important contributions to American literature and to deal faithfully and realistically with what was familiar to her. She did not try to add to the reader's stock of knowledge concerning obscure varieties of the human race. As an artist, she dealt familiarly with material and dialect that happened to be something new in American literature. Her stories continued simple in structure, but their simplicity belonged to clearness of perception, not to meagerness of imagination.

Now and then in her stories after 1894 she strikes a passionate note that is not revealed in her previous work. Her curiosity about life, her instinctive perception of the sheer actuality of passion, loom larger and with a more compelling presence in the stories written after *Bayou Folk* was given to the public. Not that this fact, in itself, is a criterion of her art, but the naturalness and ease with which she did this conveys the impression of power awaiting opportunity. And the opportunity came with *The Awakening.* Against the estheticism of the eighteen-nineties, her writings in their art appealed to a new realism, characterized by a new sense of wonder, a starker courage, when confronted by the mystery of daily existence.

The result, in her case, is a fullness compressed into a small space. "Tonie," renamed "At Chênière Caminada" when reprinted in *A Night in Acadie,* flashes a light into a human soul, revealing things that were seldom conveyed by the short-story writers of her day. Claire Duvigné is not analyzed. Her character is suggested in the sentence, "There are women whose perception of passion is very keen; they are the women who most inspire it." Love for Claire Duvigné pursues Tonie

Bocaze like a malevolent demon. And though Claire knew she was " an object of silent and consuming devotion, she was incapable of conceiving the full extent of [Tonie's] infatuation. She did not dream that under the rude, calm exterior before her a man's heart was beating clamorously, and his reason yielding to the savage instinct of his blood." Episodes and characters in " Tonie " were made use of, with slight variations, in *The Awakening.*

" A Respectable Woman " is full of psychological suggestion, and of subtle, elusive meanings. Walt Whitman's apostrophe to night:

> Night of south winds—night of the large few stars!
> Still nodding night—

is used effectively to exert its sensuous influence over Mrs. Baroda, the respectable woman.

" Athénaïse " represents the freedom and boldness of its author. Athénaïse, the young wife married without her own volition to Cazeau, toward whom no feelings of love are awakened in her childlike heart, runs away to her parents. She is an unfledged, romantic creature, who, although she is dangerously feminine, lovable, and loving, detests her married life. She gives her explanation:

> " No, I don't hate him," she returned reflectively; adding with a sudden impulse, " It's jus' being married that I detes' and despise. I hate being Mrs. Cazeau, an' I want to be Athénaïse Miché again. I can't stan' to live with a man; to have him always there; his coats and pantaloons hanging in my room; his ugly bare feet—washing them in my tub, befo' my very eyes. Ugh!"

Cazeau suffers, but is stern. There is dignity in his appeal to her:

> I expected, I was even that big a fool—I believed that yo' coming yere to me would be like the sun shinin' out of the clouds, and that our days would be like what the story books promise after the wedding. I was mistaken. But I can't imagine w'at induced you to marry me. W'atever it was, I reckon you found out you made

a mistake, too. I don' see anything to do but make the best of a bad bargain, an' shake han's over it.

But Athénaïse would not. Her brother, Montéclin, full of a spirit of meddlesome chivalry, takes her from the country to New Orleans where she can be hidden. In the city Athénaïse confides with utter frankness in a chance acquaintance, Gouvernail, a literary bachelor, whose friendship becomes a solace to the homesick girl. And as the reader pauses over Kate Chopin's quizzical characterization of Gouvernail, who " for all his *advanced* opinions was a liberal-minded fellow; a man or woman lost nothing of his respect by being married "—and asks what does the author mean, the story goes on to its climax to show wonderful insight into the heart of an impulsive, passionate woman.

For the July 1895 issue of *Moods, a Journal Intime, Wherein the Artist and the Author Pleaseth Himself,* Kate Chopin published together a story and a sketch that are direct reflections of the passionate revelations she was expressing in her writings at this time. *Moods* was a short-lived Philadelphia quarterly, sponsored by the Jenson Press of that city. Its title is sufficient explanation of its spirit. The sketch entitled " Night " deals with a personal phase of thought of the author, while the story " Juanita " cleverly points the mental and emotional position of the sketch.

A SCRAP AND A SKETCH

THE NIGHT CAME SLOWLY

I am losing my interest in human beings; in the significance of their lives and their actions. Some one has said it is better to study one man than ten books. I want neither books nor men; they make me suffer. Can one of them talk to me like the night —the Summer night? Like the stars or the caressing wind?

The night came slowly, softly, as I lay out there under the maple tree. It came creeping stealthily out of the valley thinking I did not notice. And the outlines of trees and foilage nearby blended in one black mass and the night came stealing out from them, too, and from the east and west, until the only light was in the sky, filtering through the maple leaves and a star looking down through every cranny.

The night is solemn and it means mystery.

Human shapes flitted by like intangible things. Some stole up like little mice to peep at me. I did not mind. My whole being was abandoned to the soothing and penetrating charm of the night.

The katydids began their slumber song: they are at it yet. How wise they are. They do not chatter like people. They tell me only: " sleep, sleep, sleep." The wind rippled the maple leaves like little warm love thrills.

Why do fools cumber the Earth! It was a man's voice that broke the necromancer's spell. A man came to-day with his " Bible Class." He is detestable with his red cheeks and bold eyes and coarse manner and speech. What does he know of Christ? Shall I ask a young fool who was born yesterday and will die tomorrow to tell me things of Christ? I would rather ask the stars: they have seen him.

JUANITA

To all appearances and according to all accounts, Juanita is a character who does not reflect credit upon her family or her native town of Rock Springs. I first met her there three years ago in the little back room behind her father's store. She seemed very shy, and inclined to efface herself; a heroic feat to attempt, considering the narrow confines of the room; and a hopeless one, in view of her five-feet-ten, and more than two-hundred pounds of substantial flesh, which, on that occasion, and every subsequent one when I saw her, was clad in a soiled calico " Mother Hubbard."

Her face, and particularly her mouth had a certain fresh and sensuous beauty, though I would rather not say " beauty " if I might say anything else.

I often saw Juanita that summer, simply because it was so difficult for the poor thing not to be seen. She usually sat in some obscure corner of their small garden, or behind an angle of the house, preparing vegetables for dinner or sorting her mother's flower-seed.

It was even at that day, said, with some amusement, that Juanita was not so unattractive to men as her appearance might indicate; that she had more than one admirer, and great hopes of marrying well if not brilliantly.

Upon my return to the " Springs " this summer, in asking news of the various persons who had interested me three years ago, Juanita came naturally to my mind, and her name to my lips. There were many ready to tell me of Juanita's career since I had seen her.

The father had died and she and the mother had had ups and downs, but still continued to keep the store. Whatever else happened, however, Juanita had never ceased to attract admirers, young and old. They hung on her fence at all hours; they met her in the lanes; they penetrated to the store and back to the living-room. It was even talked about that a gentleman in a plaid suit had come all the way from the city by train for no other purpose than to call upon her. It is not astonishing, in face of these persistent attentions, that speculation grew rife in Rock Springs as to whom and what Juanita would marry in the end.

For a while she was said to be engaged to a wealthy South Missouri farmer, though no one could guess when or where she had met him. Then it was learned that the man of her choice was a Texas millionaire who possessed a hundred white horses, one of which spirited animals Juanita began to drive about that time.

But in the midst of speculation and counter speculation on the subject of Juanita and her lovers, there suddenly appeared upon the scene a one-legged man; a very poor and shabby, and decidedly one-legged man. He first became known to the public through Juanita's soliciting subscriptions towards buying the unhappy individual a cork-leg.

Her interest in the one-legged man continued to show itself in various ways, not always apparent to a curious public; as was proven one morning when Juanita became the mother of a baby, whose father, she announced was her husband, the one-legged man. The story of a wandering preacher was told; a secret marriage in the State of Illinois; and a lost certificate.

However that may be, Juanita has turned her broad back upon the whole race of masculine bipeds, and lavishes the wealth of her undivided affections upon the one-legged man.

I caught a glimpse of the curious couple when I was in the village. Juanita had mounted her husband upon a dejected looking pony which she herself was apparently leading by the bridle, and they were moving up the lane towards the woods, whither, I am told, they often wander in this manner. The picture which they presented was a singular one; she with a man's big straw hat shading her inflamed moon-face, and the breeze bellying her soiled "Mother Hubbard" into monstrous proportions. He puny, helpless, but apparently content with his fate which had not even vouchsafed him the coveted cork-leg.

They go off thus to the woods together where they may love each other away from all prying eyes save those of the birds and the squirrels. But what do the squirrels care!

For my part I never expected Juanita to be more respectable than a squirrel; and I don't see how any one else could have expected it.

One very hot summer day in the Howard Memorial Library, New Orleans, I was turning the pages of a bound volume of *The Times-Democrat.* Hope of finding what I sought no longer possessed me. Listless and disappointed, I decided to keep on turning the pages to the end of the volume. Page after page of seared newspaper revealed nothing of interest. Then there on a smooth, special-textured paper in the issue of December 20, 1896, was the story I wanted, Kate Chopin's "Lilacs."

"Lilacs" realizes exquisite taste, refinement, and loving attention to detail. How Kate Chopin attained so near to short-story perfection does not, at the moment of reading, matter. There are moods when one is content with results apart from processes. But when the emotion of pleasure passes, the mind may revert insistently to the *why* and *how* of the appeal of this particular piece of literary art.

The story is full of human feeling and spiritual trial, full of conflict and love—and the crushing power of suspicion. There is no excess of phrase, no encumbering weight of words. The strongest impression upon the reader is that here is very careful work. There is a sense of living forces in this short story. The background, the environment, the atmosphere are admirable in their reality and truth.

The convent and Adrienne's world in Paris are rightly depicted. In both the portraiture is enchantingly alive. The burden of the story is the moral collision of two natures with a shock rending the hearts of others. On one side, a happy, buoyant, ardent, open-hearted nature; on the other side, an uncompromising spirit, born of an ignoble intolerance, unjust in its silent suspicion. On one side, Adrienne Farival, on the other side, the Mother Superior. Adrienne, picturesque and vivid, delightful in her worldliness, assured and assertive, seeking the peace of charity and friendship. The Mother Superior, an embittered spectator of the life about her, neither wanting nor accepting human sympathy, passionately prejudiced. At the end, out of the silent, unsuspected conflict, great suffering.

A number of admirable characters assist in the drama. Sister Agathe, Sister Marceline, Sister Marie Anne. Particularly Sister Agathe, lovable and devout and spiritual, whose mind and heart and soul endure the deepening effects of this trial. She passes through the fires of suffering.

Old Phillippe, the gardener, is honest and reminiscent and necessary to the narrative. Sophie, Adrienne's maid in Paris, believes in truth, in complete and absolute honesty when Monsieur Henri storms and protests.

In the play of life upon life, the personal struggles of the characters from widely different spheres of existence, with their gravity or humor, hopes and fears, sorrows and joys, all very human and alive, the story succeeds and satisfies. It is a rendering of real life moving and surprising, in which high tragedy and genial comedy take their parts, each with a bearing upon the other that is true to life and true to art. It is reprinted for the first time in Part II, pp. 226–239.

A Night in Acadie, Kate Chopin's second collection of stories, was published in Chicago by Way and Williams in 1897. The covers of the book display an unusually ambitious attempt to convey the picture of a bayou with a silver moon shimmering on dark water! The vision was somewhat beyond the binder's art.

Simplicity and directness of treatment combined with an invariable verity of motive are the characteristics of the stories in this collection. The hand of the artist is apparent in every one of them. The hopes and loves of her lowly single-hearted Acadian or Creole folk create an indulgent sympathy; the mingled humor and pathos of their brief histories move to laughter or tears.

From story to story, each so different from the other in the conditions of life surrounding the characters, and yet all alike in their strict adherence to the finished literary method of the author, the mind is more and more moved to an enthusiasm of intellectual gratification over the assured touch, the perfect balance of values, the flashes of insight, and the keen artistic sense that holds back the word too much. "A great truth that is fast slipping away from us," writes Agnes Repplier, "is the absolute independence of art—art nourished by imagination and revealing beauty. This is the hand that gilds the grayness of the world; this is the voice that sings in flute tones through the silence of the ages."

In the world of literature there are a few choice spirits who echo Miss Repplier's plaint, who keep fast their hold upon "art revealing beauty"—who have no problems to unfold, no theories to expound, no fatal habit of imparting opinions—and among them must be ranked Kate Chopin.

The stories in *A Night in Acadie* show the same admirable handling of the patois of the Louisiana bayou country, the same clear delineation of the life of that region. But Kate Chopin's gifts as a writer go deeper than mere patois or local description of background. There is truth in all her writings. She knows the characteristics of the negro race through and through and strikes an elemental note now and then to prove it. Joel Chandler Harris has not written anything that better expresses the mystical relation between the negro and the animate world of nature, than some of the passages from Kate Chopin's "Tante Cat'rinette." The whole story in its motive of self-sacrifice and in its artistic telling is "art nourished by imagination."

Self-sacrifice and devotion are constant motives in these short stories. Simple, sincere, and unconscious goodness reveal the better side of human nature through many of her characters.

In that humorously pathetic little story " Ozème's Holiday," where Ozème starts out in holiday attire for a few days' pleasure and is constrained by the pure goodness of his heart to spend it in picking a poor negro woman's crop of cotton, which otherwise would be lost, the continual protest of his other self against his action and his quaint concealment of it, is all touching and entirely charming and human.

Then, there is Cavenelle! What a character study he is—a gem of literary art—in his simple, unconscious devotion to the poor delicate sister with her weak, pipe-like voice.

Perhaps only one other story in the collection is superior to " Cavenelle " in the delicacy and finish and in the spiritual quality of its self-sacrifice. And that is " Nég Créol." This exquisite vignette of the French Market of New Orleans illustrates one of Kate Chopin's characteristic literary touches—that of surprising the reader with a climax that *is* a spiritual illumination. Not even De Maupassant, whom she most suggests, is more clever at this.

Chicot, the Nég Créol, has supported his old mistress during years of poverty until her death, all the while rigidly keeping the secret of her miserable existence while boasting of the social grandeur of her family—the Boisdurés. One might naturally suppose his faithfulness to end with death, but that was not Chicot's idea.

> " Look, Chicot ! " cried Matteo's wife, " yonda go the fune'al. Mus' a be that a Boisduré woman we talken 'bout yesaday."
>
> But Chicot paid no heed. What was to him the funeral of a woman who had died in St. Philip St. ? He did not even turn his head in the direction of the moving procession. He went on scaling his red-snapper.

Her portraits in all particulars are true to nature. Mr. Billy in " The Lilies " is the quick-tempered, passionate, yet kind-hearted Southern planter, with jingling spurs and loud voice, grown dictatorial from the habit of summarily ordering about the servants of the plantation. Marie Louise is the impulsive French child, anxious with her load of lilies to atone for the crime of Toto, the runaway calf. Mamouche is the mischievous little vagabond given to all sorts of pranks and tricks, always in trouble, never improved by adversity. Pompey is the big-mouthed waiter, with long white apron and wide-open eyes, and a sense of hilarious jollity.

Visions of the bright, languorous Southland, with its magnolias and jessamine, its mockingbirds warbling through the night, its air fragrant with the odors of flowers, are conjured up in the stores of *A Night in Acadie.* It is a greater book than *Bayou Folk.* In the earlier volume the grace and delicacy of her art is paramount; in the later an intellectual and spiritual quality is added which keeps one brooding long after the spell of charm has passed.

Kate Chopin belongs to the artistic realism of today, as well as to her own generation. This generation sees life, or reality, differently from any generation before it. The literary artist in his absorbing process is no longer a discoverer, no longer a refiner, still less a dictator, but an observer at best, with an impulse to state his impressions clearly. And if one were to ask in what way after all Kate Chopin differs from a past-master in the short story art, say, de Maupassant, the answer may be that she blesses while he bewailed the terrible clear-sightedness which is the strength and the anguish of every good writer.

> "Tout autour de lui," wrote de Maupassant in *Sur l'Eau,* "devient de verre, les coeurs, les actes, les intentions secrètes, et il souffre d'un mal étrange, d'une sorte de dédoublement de l'esprit, qui fait de lui un être effrayablement vibrant, machiné, compliqué et fatiguant pour lui même."

By Kate Chopin this "dédoublement de l'esprit" was regarded, not as a bar to happiness, but as a key to truth. Yet there are many keyholes in the door to truth; the author of "En Amour" and "La Maison Tellier" had one key, Kate Chopin had another. Possibly no more can be said than that the earth goes round the sun, and short-story writers with it.

Chapter XII

THE AWAKENING

IN 1899 Herbert S. Stone and Co. of Chicago published *The Awakening,* a novel the author intended to name *A Solitary Soul.* Kate Chopin had devoted a year's care to this intimate, analytical study of the character of a selfish, capricious woman. The scenes are laid in New Orleans and in Grand Isle.

Edna, a Presbyterian girl born in Kentucky, of remote French extraction, marries Leonce Pontellier, a Creole Catholic of New Orleans, in a reaction from a fancied love affair of her girlhood. Motherhood does not keep her from being discontented. It is her final awakening which gives the book its title. And Edna's awakening is a tragedy of self-assertion.

Her husband is fond of her as he is fond of all the well-selected furnishings of his home. He is generous and unquestioning to a fault, with futile generosity after an injustice, and with trust devoid of understanding. It was her husband's misfortune that he did not make the interesting discovery himself that his wife was a human being; but he had his brokerage business to think about, and brokers deal in stocks, not hearts. It was Edna's misfortune that another man revealed her to herself. When the knowledge came it produced profounder dissatisfaction. Vague longings possessed her. In the beginning she had no thought of a complete abandonment of all restraint.

Resentment gradually made her sullen. Robert Lebrun, whose heart was ensnared before he realized it, went away to Mexico to make money, which was quite the proper thing to do. To her restless, capricious, sensual nature Robert had become a consuming reality. After his departure Edna abandoned herself to all sorts of foolish fancies to divert her mind. Her children did not help her. She did not feel that loving children was the whole duty of a woman. She loved them, but said that while she was willing to die for them, she could not give up anything essential for them. This sounded clever because it was paradoxical. She did not really know what she meant.

Edna dabbled with brush and canvas. Mademoiselle Reisz told her that to be an artist one must be courageous, to dare and defy. Unhappily, Edna was not courageous. She was not an artist; she was only a dreamer with vague longings. Then Alcée Arobin came. Edna's husband was extinct so far as she was concerned, and the man she loved was beyond her power. The thought of Robert in Mexico only deepened her discontent. Alcée's passion without love was not to Edna's liking. Without the courage to dismiss him, she let sensation occupy her vacant life, knowing the while that it only made it emptier and more hopeless. Her husband, meanwhile, lingered in New York on business.

Robert returns from Mexico. He and Edna meet by accident. She persuades him to visit her at her home and she declares her love for him. At this point comes the unique feature of the narrative—perhaps a most unique feature in the realms of the novelist's art. In the midst of their mutual declarations of love, Edna is summoned to the bedside of a woman friend in the throes of childbirth. She thinks of her own children. She is torn by contending emotion—to choose between her duty as a mother and her unholy love for Robert.

Robert solves her dilemma. He is gone when she returns home. Only his note is there to say, "Good-by—because I love you."

Awakened to the reality of her loss of Robert, awakened to the shifting, treacherous, fickle depths of her own passionate nature, she returns to Grand Isle alone. To her distraught thinking, self-destruction is the only way out. The tragedy is accomplished in picturesque fashion.

The Awakening met with a storm of adverse criticism. Harshness and bitterness were not absent from the reviews that extolled the novel as an artistic achievement.[1] The author's motives were attacked; even her character. The book was taken from circulation by order of the librarian of the St. Louis Mercantile Library. Kate Chopin was denied membership in the Fine Arts Club of the city. She was asked by one of the local newspapers to give an interview justifying her book. This she would not do. Stunned and bewildered by the reception of her story, with a feeling of grim humor she authorized this announcement in the July 1899 number of *Book News,* published in New York:

> Having a group of people at my disposal, I thought it might be entertaining (to myself) to throw them together and see what would happen. I never dreamed of Mrs. Pontellier making such a mess of things and working out her own damnation as she did. If I had had the slightest intimation of such a thing I would have excluded her from the company. But when I found out what she was up to, the play was half over and it was then too late.
> St. Louis, Mo., May 28, 1899 signed: KATE CHOPIN.

Her sense of humor, evident in this notice, saved the situation in part, but she was hurt. She never spoke of this at any time.

What is most curious and valuable to consider, is the relationship between Kate Chopin's life and her study of the feminine mind in *The Awakening.* The author's imagination, as a very young girl, through the zeal and the story-telling propensity of her great-grandmother, had been saturated with a keen interest in woman's nature, and its mysterious vagaries. This curiosity never dimmed.

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[1] The St. Louis *Republic* for May 20, 1899, has this speciment of fatuous comment: "The glittering defect of the book greets one on the title page, which rumor says was furnished by the intelligent publishers. . . . The science of the human soul and its operations is instinctive in Kate Chopin. In her creations she commits unutterable crimes against polite society, but in the essentials of her art she never blunders. Like most of her work, however *The Awakening* is too strong drink for moral babes, and should be labeled 'poison.'" Similar remarks are found in the *Globe-Democrat,* St. Louis, May 13; *The Times-Herald,* Chicago, June 1; *Public Opinion,* New York, June 22; *Literature,* New York, June 23; *The Herald,* Boston, August 12; *The Congregationalist,* Boston, August 24, and many others.

I believe *The Awakening* had its origin in these story-telling days of impressionable youth. I have no doubt Kate Chopin's sympathies in the stories told her by Madame Victoria Charleville were with Madame Chouteau. One review suggested that her sympathies in *The Awakening* were with Edna (*The Los Angeles Times,* June 25, 1899). I believe they were.

More important than the consideration of the influence of curiosity aroused in youth, is the endeavor to discriminate and discover the literary influences that engendered *The Awakening.* The novel may be similar to D'Annunzio's *Triumph of Death,* Edna may be " la femme de trente ans " whose dangerous attractions Marcel Proust admirably displayed, but it is also possible to decide that Kate Chopin was influenced by Beardsley's hideous and haunting pictures, with their disfiguring leer of sensuality, yet carrying a distinguishing strength and grace and individuality.

An exposition of an author as nothing but a synthesis of influences, strong and sharply defined as links in a chain, does more credit to an investigator's industry and intimate acquaintance with fiction than to a sense of perspective, and to what I must call, for want of a more comprehensive phrase, a knowledge of literary psychology. Kate Chopin was an original genius. Her story may be similar to any number of novels, but all suggestion of direct literary descent in method or manner of treatment is false. Literary influences are deceptive at best, and in the case of Kate Chopin no single author can be said to have contributed the weightiest influential impetus to *The Awakening.* She was a great reader, a contemporary mind. She absorbed the atmosphere and the mood of the ending of the century, as that ending is reflected in Continental European art and literature. Perhaps in St. Louis she was closest in touch with the tendencies of the century's ending—in music, poetry, fiction. She was not imitative in the narrow sense of being completely under the sway of any one writer, but the range of her debts is wide: Flaubert, Tolstoi, Turgénieff, D'Annunzio, Bourget, especially de Maupassant, all contributed to her broad and diverse culture.

The Awakening follows the current of erotic morbidity that flowed strongly through the literature of the last two decades of the nineteenth century. The end of the century became a momentary dizziness over an abyss of voluptuousness, and Kate Chopin in St. Louis experienced a partial attack of the prevailing artistic vertigo. The philosophy of Schopenhauer, the music of Wagner, the Russian novel, Maeterlinck's plays—all this she absorbed. *The Awakening* in her case is the result—an impression of life as a delicious agony of longing.

In *The Awakening* under her touch the Creole life of Louisiana glowed with a rich exotic beauty. The very atmosphere of the book is voluptuous, the atmosphere of the Gulf Coast, a place of strange and passionate moods.

The mania for the exotic that fed upon evocations of a barbaric past—Salome's dance, Cleopatra's luxury, the splendor and cruelty of Salammbo's Carthage—gave energy to the creation in this country of two works dealing with southern Louisiana, Lafcadio Hearn's *Chita* and Kate Chopin's *The Awakening*. These books owe nothing to each other. They are derived from a common source.

The Awakening is exotic in setting, morbid in theme, erotic in motivation.

Kate Chopin felt most profoundly and expressed most poignantly in *The Awakening* facts about life which to her were important, facts which easily might be overlooked, she thought. Being a woman she saw life instinctively in terms of the individual. She took a direct, personal, immediate interest in the intimate personal affairs of Edna's daily life and changing moods. But the questions arise, "Is it at all important? Did Kate Chopin by her art reveal a fresh beauty or vision or aspiration?" In all earnestness she meant *The Awakening* to be something more than literature, more than the mere art of writing, more than a pleasant help for the passing of leisure hours!

The reader, following Edna as she walks for the last time down to the beach at Grand Isle—well, what does he feel?

Merely that human nature can be a sickening reality. Then the insistent query comes—*cui bono?*

The water of the Gulf stretched out before her, gleaming with the million lights of the sun. The voice of the sea is seductive, never ceasing, whispering, clamoring, murmuring, inviting the soul to wander in abysses of solitude. All along the white beach, up and down, there was no living thing in sight. A bird with a broken wing was beating the air above, reeling, fluttering, circling disabled down, down to the water.

Edna had found her old bathing suit still hanging, faded, upon its accustomed peg.

She put it on, leaving her clothing in the bath-house. But when she was there beside the sea, absolutely alone, she cast the unpleasant, pricking garments from her, and for the first time in her life she stood naked in the open air, at the mercy of the sun, the breeze that beat upon her, and the waves that invited her.

How strange and awful it seemed to stand naked under the sky! how delicious! She felt like some new-born creature, opening its eyes in a familiar world that it had never known.

The foamy wavelets curled up to her white feet, and coiled like serpents about her ankles. She walked out. The water was chill, but she walked on. The water was deep, but she lifted her white body and reached out with a long, sweeping stroke. The touch of the sea is sensuous, enfolding the body in its soft close embrace.

She went on and on. She remembered the night she swam far out, and recalled the terror that seized her at the fear of being unable to regain the shore. She did not look back now, but went on and on, thinking of the blue-grass meadow that she had traversed when a little child, believing that it had no beginning and no end.

Her arms and legs were growing tired.

She thought of Leonce and the children. They were a part of her life. But they need not have thought that they could possess her, body and soul. How Mademoiselle Reisz would have laughed, perhaps sneered, if she knew! "And you call yourself an artist! What pretensions, Madame! The artist must possess the courageous soul that dares and defies."

Exhaustion was pressing upon and overpowering her.

"Good-by—because I love you." He did not know; he did not understand. He would never understand. Perhaps Doctor Mandelet would have understood if she had seen him—but it was too late; the shore was far behind her, and her strength was gone.

She looked into the distance, and the old terror flamed up for an instant, then sank again. Edna heard her father's voice and her sister Margaret's. She heard the barking of an old dog that was chained to the sycamore tree. The spurs of the cavalry officer clanged as he walked across the porch. There was the hum of bees, and the musky odor of pinks filled the air.

After reading, again there is that most insistent query—*cui bono!*

The theme was not an easy subject to treat, for morbid states of mind and motives need endurance and a resistant restraint on the author's part. Kate Chopin's extraordinary tact enabled her to produce a book which tells the truth without offense, with detachment, and with just that gleam of humor which makes even the nasty digestible, illuminates the agreeable and gives a grace of movement to the whole. But was the theme deserving of the exquisite care given it?

In the press and in private correspondence Kate Chopin was reminded that Brunetière, the editor of *Revue des Deux Mondes,* had refused to publish Tolstoi's story with the same title as her novel. The ground of Brunetière's refusal was unsuitability of subject. He held that the exalted character of the central idea could not atone for the selection of so offensive a theme. The French editor's objection to the Russian author's story, it was said, applied to this American novel with the same title. (Tolstoi's novel was published serially in *The Cosmopolitan* under the name of *The Awakening.* As Kate Chopin's book was in press and had the prior right to the title, Tolstoi's title was changed to *Resurrection.*)

Adverse criticism Kate Chopin destroyed. Favorable opinions were not wanting—some of them glowing with enthusiasm. Of these several have been preserved.

If Kate Chopin was ever astonished in her life, she knew a variety of astonishment never before experienced when a stout packet written from London by Lady Janet Scammon Young came to her in the autumn of 1899. Lady Janet enclosed a letter from Dr. Dunrobin Thomson, an eminent physician of London, who keenly analyzed *The Awakening.*

8 Newman Street
Oxford St. W.
London.

" Kate Chopin ":

I feel sure I ought to send you the enclosed letter from the great consulting physician of England, who is also one of the purest and best of men, and who has been said by a great editor to be " the soundest critic since Matthew Arnold."

Your book has deeply stirred some other noble souls to whom I have lent it. Like Doctor Thomson I assume that it is to be republished over here. Maarten Maartens, who was here last week, said *The Awakening* ought to be translated into Dutch, Scandinavian, and Russian.

But great as is my interest in this book I confess to a still deeper interest in one which you ought to write—which you alone among living novelists *could* write. Evidently like all of us you believe *Edna* to have been worth saving—believe her to have been too noble to go to her death as she did. I quite bow to Doctor T's better sense of art. The conventions required her to die. But suppose her husband had been conceived on higher lines? Suppose Dr. Mandelet had said other things to him—had said, for example: " Pontellier, like most men you fancy that because you have possessed your wife hundreds of times she necessarily long ago came to entire womanly self knowledge—that your embraces have as a matter of course aroused whatever of passion she may be endowed with. You are mistaken. She is just becoming conscious of sex—is just finding herself compelled to take account of masculinity *as such.* You cannot *arrest* that process whatever you do; you should not wish to do so. Assist this birth of your wife's deeper womanliness. Be tender, let her know that you see how *Robert, Arobin* affect her. Laugh with her over the evident influence of her womanhood over them. Tell her how, *in itself* it is *natural,* that it is divinely made & therefore innocent and pure and the very basis of social life—else why is true society absolutely non-existent without both sexes. There is no *society* in Turkey. Show her the nonsense of ascribing all this inter-influence to 'the feminine mind acting upon the masculine mind' —a saying that so severe a thinker as Herbert Spencer ridicules. Above all *trust* her, let her see that you do. Only the inherently base woman betrays a *trust*. Leave her with *Robert,* with *Arobin. Trusted* she will never fail you—distrusted, ignored, left in ignorance of what her new unrest really means she will fall. Follow my advice and in a year you will have a new wife with whom you will fall in love again; & you will be a new husband, manlier, more virile and impassioned with whom she will fall in love again."

Suppose *Dr. Mandelet* had thus spoken, and *Pontellier* had thus acted?

Of course in its brutal literal significance we wholly reject and loathe the French maxim: "The lover completes the wife," yet if we know the true facts of nature we must confess that there is a profound inner truth in it. No woman comes to her full womanly empire and charm who has not felt in what Dr. T—— calls "her passional nature" the arousing power of more than one man. But oh how important to her purity, her honor, her inner self-respect that she (again quoting Dr. T——) "distinguish between passion and love." So that instead of guiltily saying, "I fear I love that man" she shall say within herself with *no* sense of guilt—"How that man's masculinity stirs me"—say it above all to *her husband.* Now all this, which I am saying so clumsily needs saying powerfully; needs to be taught by that most potent method of expression open to man—a great novel. *You* can write it. You alone. You are free from decadency. Your mind and heart are beautiful, free, clean, sympathetic. Give us a great hearted manly *man* —give us a great natured woman for his wife. Give us the awakening of her whole nature, let her go to the *utmost* short of *actual* adultery—show that her danger is in her ignorance of the great distinctions of which Dr. T—— speaks. Show us how such a husband can save such a wife and turn the influence of sex to its intended beneficient end. I trust I need not say that my suggestion that she go *very very* far is not for the sake of scenes of passion, but that readers may be helped whose self respect is shipwrecked or near it because *they* have gone far and are saying "I might as well go all the way. . . ."

If I can do anything for you pray command me. I know publishers, translators, &c, &c. I shall go to Montreux in December at latest, but the address at the beginning will always find me.

With every best wish,

JANET SCAMMON YOUNG.

Dr. Dúnrobin Thomson's letter came to Kate Chopin with Lady Janet's epistle. It was not without its surprises, most acceptable to the author of *The Awakening,* who had experienced constant bitterness from editors and reviewers in this country.

Langham Hotel
London
5. Oct. 99.

My dear Lady Janet:

It is commonplace to say that I am indebted to you for a great pleasure in the loan of that remarkable book *The Awakening.* I have read it twice—once at a sitting when I ought to have been asleep, and again more deliberately in my brougham. Doubtless it will be published over here, but I am having my bookseller get two copies of the American edition—one for Crestwood and one for town. It is easily the book of the year. The ending reminds one of *The Open Question,* but how vastly superior in power, ethic and wit is this newer novel.

You accuse "Kate Chopin" (a pen name I suppose) of an unnecessary tragedy. My dear Lady Janet, the authoress took the world as it is, as all art must—and 'twas inevitable that poor dear *Edna,* being noble, and having Pontellier for husband, and Arobin for lover, and average women for friends, should die.

My wrath is not toward "Kate Chopin" at all. That which makes *The Awakening* legitimate is that the author deals with the commonest of human experiences. You fancy *Edna's* case exceptional? Trust an old doctor—most common. It is only that *Edna* was nobler, and took that last clean swim. The others live. Not all meet *Arobin* or *Robert.* The essence of the matter lies in the accursed stupidity of men. They marry a girl, she becomes a mother. They imagine she has sounded the heights and depths of womanhood. Poor fools! She is not even awakened. She, on her part is a victim of the abominable prudishness which masquerades as modesty or virtue. Every great and beautiful fact of nature has a vile counterfeit. The counterfeit of goodness is self-righteousness—of true modesty, prudishness. The law, spoken or implied, which governs the upbringing of girls is that passion is disgraceful. It is to be assumed that a self respecting female has it not. In so far as normally constituted womanhood *must* take account of *something* sexual, it is called "love." It was inevitable, therefore, that *Edna* should call her feeling for *Robert* love. It was as simply & purely passion as her feeling for *Arobin.* "Kate Chopin" would not admit that. Being (I assume) a woman, she too would reserve the word love for *Edna's* feeling for *Robert.*

The especial point of a wife's danger when her beautiful, God given womanhood awakes, is that she will save her self-respect by imagining herself in love with the awakener. She should be taught by her husband to distinguish between passion and love. Then she is safe, invulnerable. Even if, at the worst she "falls" —she will rise again.

It is inevitable, natural, and therefore clean and harmless, that a normal, beautifully constituted married woman will be stirred in her passional being by the men between whom and herself there is that mysterious affinity of the real nature of which we know nothing. If she calls that stirring of her nature "love" she is lost. If she knows perfectly well that it is passion; if she esteems and respects her passional capacity as she does her capacity to be moved by a song or a sonnet, or a great poem, or a word nobly said—she is safe. She knows that that thing *is.* She is no more ashamed of it than of her responsiveness to any other great appeal. She knows that it does not touch her wife-life, her mother-life, her self-hood. It is not "naughty."

A wise husband (there are some) is at no point so loving and tenderly wise as at this point. A cad or a cur is (God save the mark) *jealous.* If his wife is weak she quails, and hides from men or shelters herself in a pretended indifference. If she is strong she resents the monstrous insult of his suspicion. I am happier over nothing in my professional life than that I have helped many *men* at this point—many men, many women. I have said to more than one man: "Your wife's nature is stirring; lovingly help her. Let her see that you know it and like it; and that you distinguish perfectly between her *heart,* her wifely loyalty, and her body—make her distinguish it too."

But I weary you. This book has stirred me to the soul. *Edna* is like a personal friend. She is not impure. The art, the local colour, the distinctness of characterisation of even the minor personages are something wonderful.

Thanking you again, dear Lady Janet,

I am as ever yours faithfully

DUNROBIN THOMPSON

After the renowned Doctor's letter what is there to say? One can only wish that Dr. S. Weir Mitchell had read *The Awakening* and expressed his views.

Aroused by the enthusiasm of these English statements of approval, Kate Chopin yielded to the entreaty of the editor of the St. Louis *Post-Dispatch* for a lengthy personal account of her work and her methods. A chatty informal essay appeared as the feature of the Magazine Section of the paper, Sunday, November 26, 1899:

On certain brisk, bright days I like to walk from my home, near Thirteenth Street, down to the shopping district. After a few such experiments I begin to fancy that I have the walking habit. Doubtless I convey the same impression to acquaintances who see me from the car window "hot-footing" it down Olive street or Washington Avenue. But in my sub-consciousness, as my friend Mrs. R—— would say, I know that I have not the walking habit.

Eight or nine years ago I began to write stories—short stories which appeared in the magazines, and I forthwith began to suspect I had the writing habit. The public shared this impression, and called me an author. Since, though I have written many short stories and a novel or two, I am forced to admit that I have not the writing habit. But it is hard to make people with the questioning habit believe this.

Now, where, when, why, what do you write? are some of the questions that I remember. *How do I write?* On a lapboard with a block of paper, a stub pen and a bottle of ink bought at the corner grocery, which keeps the best in town.

Where do I write? In a Morris chair beside the window, where I can see a few trees and a patch of sky, more or less blue.

When do I write? I am greatly tempted here to use slang and reply "any old time," but that would lend a tone of levity to this bit of confidence whose seriousness I want to keep intact if possible. So I shall say I write in the morning, when not too strongly drawn to struggle with the intricacies of a pattern, and in the afternoon, if the temptation to try a new furniture polish on an old table leg is not too powerful to be denied; sometimes at night, though as I grow older I am more and more inclined to believe that night was made for sleep.

Why do I write? is a question which I have often asked myself and never very satisfactorily answered. Story-writing—at least with me—is the spontaneous expressions of impressions gathered goodness knows where. To seek the source, the impulse of a story is like tearing a flower to pieces for wantonness.

What do I write? Well not everything that comes into my head, but much of which I have written lies between the covers of my books.

There are stories that seem to write themselves, and others which positively refuse to be written—which no amount of coaxing can bring to anything. I do not believe any writer has ever made a " portrait " in fiction. A trick, a mannerism, a physical trait or mental characteristic go a very short way towards portraying the complete individual in real life who suggests the individual in the writer's imagination. The " material " of a writer is to the last degree uncertain, and I fear not marketable. I have been told stories which were looked upon as veritable gold mines by the generous narrators who placed them at my disposal. I have been taken to spots supposed to be alive with local color. I have been introduced to excruciating characters with frank permission to use them as I liked, but never, in any single instance, has such material been of the slightest service. I am completely at the mercy of unconscious selection. To such an extent is this true, that what is called the polishing up process has always proved disastrous to my work, and I avoid it, preferring the integrity of crudities to artificialities.

How hard it is for one's acquaintances and friends to realize that one's books are to be taken seriously, and that they are subject to the same laws which govern the existence of others' books! I have a son who is growing wroth over this question: Where can I find your mother's books, or latest book?

" The very next time any one asks me that question," he exclaimed excitedly, " I am going to tell them to try the stock yards! "

I hope he won't. He might thus offend a possible buyer. Politeness, besides being a virtue, is some times an art. I am often met with the same question, and I always try to be polite. "My latest book? Why, you will find it, no doubt, at the bookseller's or the libraries."

"The libraries! Oh, no, they don't keep it." She hadn't thought of the bookseller's. It's real hard to think of everything! Sometimes I feel as if I should like to get a good, remunerative job to do the thinking for some people. This may sound conceited, but it isn't. If I had space (I have plenty of time; time is my own, but space belongs to the *Post-Dispatch*), I should like to demonstrate satisfactorily that it is not conceit.

I trust it will not be giving away professional secrets to say that many readers would be surprised, perhaps shocked, at the questions which some newspaper editors will put to a defenseless woman under the guise of flattery.

For instance: "How many children have you?" This form is subtle and greatly to be commended in dealing with women of shy and retiring propensities. A woman's reluctance to speak of her children has not yet been chronicled. I have a good many, but they'd be simply wild if I dragged them into this. I might say something of those who are at a safe distance—the idol of my soul in Kentucky; the light of my eye off in Colorado; the treasure of his mother's heart in Louisiana—but I mistrust the form of their displeasure, with poisoned candy going through the mails.

"Do you smoke cigarettes?" is a question which I consider impertinent, and I think most women will agree with me. Suppose I do smoke cigarettes? Am I going to tell it out in meeting? Suppose I don't smoke cigarettes. Am I going to admit such a reflection upon my artistic integrity, and thereby bring upon myself the contempt of the guild?

In answering questions in which an editor believes his readers to be interested, the victim cannot take herself too seriously.

Kate Chopin never took herself "too seriously." She skilfully avoided, however, in her pleasantly personal essay all mention of *The Awakening.*

Chapter XIII

TO THE LAST, 1904

AN OPINION prevails among those who have shown their regard for Kate Chopin by reading her works, and occasionally writing about them, that she wrote nothing more after the disappointing reception given her last novel. Not for the sake of argument, not for any perverse pleasure of contradicting, may I suggest that the list of her writings after July 1899 be consulted? It is possible to explain why in 1907 Leonides Rutledge Whipple wrote in his essay on Kate Chopin for the *Library of Southern Literature:*[1]

> The unfriendly reception given [The Awakening] by certain narrow-minded critics struck deep at the author's heart, even killing her desire to write so that from about 1899 until her death in St. Louis, August, 1904, she produced nothing more.

Professor Whipple's statement was prompted by a letter written him from St. Louis, November 12, 1907, in which Kate Chopin's daughter, Mrs. Lelia Hattersley, said:

> My Mother . . . never discussed the reception of *The Awakening* with me. . . . But I know how deeply she was hurt by many facts, principally that she never wrote again.

In consequence, Professor Fred Lewis Pattee, in his *American Literature Since 1870,*[2] repeated the natural mistake:

> . . . five years before her death, discouraged by the reception of her novel *The Awakening,* Kate Chopin became silent.

Miss Dorothy Anne Dondore's article, "Kate O'Flaherty Chopin," in the *Dictionary of American Biography* continues the same tradition:[3]

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[1] Vol. II, p. 864.

[2] F. L. Pattee, *American Literature Since 1870,* New York, 1915, p. 364.

[3] Vol. II, p. 91 (1930).

It is one of the tragedies of recent American literature that Mrs. Chopin should have written *The Awakening* two decades in advance of its time, that she should have been so grievously hurt by the attacks of provincial critics as to lay aside her pen.

From January 1900 to January 1902 Kate Chopin wrote six short stories. Three exist in manuscript; three were published. Three other stories written before 1900 were published between April 19, 1900, and March 27, 1902. The details of titles, periodicals, and dates of publication are to be found in the list of her writings. Noticeable in the stories after 1900 is an almost total absence of penetration, of inspiration, of the subtle charm and personal distinction of style that characterized her short stories of the previous years.

Only one of this last group, " The White Eagle," a story reflecting a mood of lingering melancholy, displays any originality or ingenuity.

THE WHITE EAGLE

It was not an eagle of flesh and feathers but a cast-iron bird poised with extended wings and wearing an expression which, in a human being, would have passed for wisdom. He stood conspicuously upon the lawn of an old homestead. In the spring, if any white paint went the rounds, he came in for his share of it, otherwise he had to be content with a coat of whitewash such as the sheds and fences were treated to.

But he was always proud; in the summer standing spotless on the green with a background of climbing roses; when the leaves fell softly and he began to show unsightly spots here and there; when the snow wrapped him like a shrowd, or the rain beat upon him and the wind struck at him with wild fury—he was always proud.

A small child could sit in the shadows of his wings. There was one who often did on sunny days while her soul drank the unconscious impressions of childhood. Later she grew sensible of her devotion for the white eagle and she often caressed his venerable head or stroked his wings in passing on the lawn.

But people die and children squabble over estates, large or small. This estate was not large, but the family was, and it seemed but a pittance that fell to the share of each. The girl secured her portion and the white eagle beside; no one else wanted it. She moved her belongings up the street into a pleasant room of a neighbor who rented lodgings. The eagle was set down in the back yard under an apple tree, and for a while he succeeded in keeping the birds away. But they grew accustomed to his brooding presence and often alighted on his outspread wings after their mischievous on-slaughts upon the apples. Indeed he seemed to be of no earthly use except to have sheltered the unconscious summer dreams of a small child.

People wondered at the young woman's persistence in carting him about with her when she moved from place to place. Her want of perspicacity might have explained this eccentricity. It explained many other things, chiefly the misfortune which overtook her of losing her small share of the small estate. But that is such an ordinary human experience, it seems useless to mention it; and, besides, the white eagle had nothing to do with it.

There was finally no place for him save in a corner of her narrow room, that was otherwise crowded with a bed, a chair or two, a table and a sewing machine, that always stood by the window. Oftentimes when she sewed at the machine, or else from her bed before she arose in the early dawn, she fancied the white eagle blinked at her from his sombre corner on the floor, an effect produced by remnants of white paint that still stuck in his deep eye sockets.

The years went by, slowly, swiftly, haltingly as they marked off the uneven progress of her life. No mate came to seek her out. Her hair began to grizzle. Her skin got dry and waxlike upon her face and hands. Her chest grew shrunken from eternal bending over the sewing-machine and lack of pure, fresh air. The white eagle was always there in the gloomy corner. He helped her to remember; or, better, he never permitted her to forget. Sometimes little children in the house penetrated to her room, and amused themselves with him. Once they made a Christmas spectacle of him with a cocked hat and bits of tawdry tinsel suspended from his wings.

When the woman—no longer young—grew sick and had a fierce fever, she uttered a shriek in the night which brought a straggler inquiring at her bedside. The eagle had blinked and blinked, had left his corner and come and perched upon her, pecking at her bosom. That was the last she knew of her white eagle in this life. She died, and a close relative, with some sentiment and possessing the means of transportation, came from a distance and laid her out suitably and buried her decently in the old cemetery on the side of the hill. It was far up on the very crest, overlooking a vast plain that reached out to the horizon.

None of her belongings, save perhaps the sewing-machine, were of a character to arouse family interest. No one knew what to do with the white eagle. The suggestion that it be thrown into the ash-bin was not favorably received by the sentimental relative, who happened to remember a small, barefooted child seated in the summer grass within the shadow of its outstreched wings.

So the white eagle was carted for the last time up the hill to the old cemetery and placed like a tombstone at the head of her grave. He has stood there for years. Sometimes little children in spring throw wreaths of clover-blossoms over him. The blossoms dry and rot and fall to pieces in time. The grave has sunk unkept to the level. The grass grows high above it in the summer time. With the sinking grave the white eagle has dipped forward as if about to take his last flight. But he never does. He gazes across the vast plain with an expression which in a human being would pass for wisdom.

Between 1891 and 1899 Kate Chopin wrote a number of poems, lyrics of love and fancy, that have remained in manuscript. The best are:

IT MATTERS ALL

A little more or less of health
  What does it matter!
A little more or less of wealth
  A boon to scatter!
But more or less of love your own to call,
  It matters all!

O, ME! O, MY!

There's music enough in the wood to-day
  O, me! O, my!
With Love a-piping his same old lay:
  We live; we die!
But tomorrow's a million miles away
When the world is green and the month is May.

A FANCY

Happ'ly naught came of it.
'Twas but a fancy born of Fate and wishing.
But I thought all the same of it.

Now that the wishing's dead,
I find that naught remains of it.
Fancy and Fate are fled.

PSYCHE'S LAMENT

O let all darkness fall upon mine eyes:
I want no more of light!
Since Helios in the blazing skies
Cannot make day so bright
As my lost one did make for me the night!

O sombre sweetness; black enfolden charms,
Come to me once again!
Leave me not desolate; with empty arms
That seeking, strive in vain
To clasp a void where warmest love hath lain.

Now is no heart beat pulsing into mine
Since he is gone. I see,
I feel but the cursed lights that shine—
That made my Love to flee.
O Love, O God, O Night come back to me!

LIFE

A day with a splash of sunlight,
Some mist and a little rain.
A life with a dash of love-light,
Some dreams and a touch of pain.
To love a little and then to die!
To live a little and never know why!

AN HOUR

If yesterday were but to-day
And I could gather all tomorrow
Into an hour that would stay

No further time I'd seek to borrow.
For life is long enough to live it
And love is deep enough to give it
Since you are love and life is sorrow.

If yesterday were but to-day
And I could gather all tomorrow!

A DOCUMENT IN MADNESS

There's an ecstasy of madness
Where the March hares dwell;
A delirium of gladness
Too wild to tell.

The Moon has gone a-maying
And the Sun's so far!
O! what's the use of staying
With a blinking star!

Let us join hands this instant
And fly a-top the hill,
And whether near or distant
We'll ne'er stop still

Or we find the Moon that's Maying
And the sun so far,
That left us here a-praying
To a blinking star.

That Kate Chopin did feel the pangs of disappointment in 1899 may be assumed from a brief meditative essay left among her papers that has the mood of weariness in the sentence, "Oh! I could weep at being left by the wayside."

A REFLECTION

Some people are born with a vital and responsive energy. It not only enables them to keep abreast of the times, it qualifies them to furnish in their own personality a good bit of the motive power to the mad pace. They do not need to apprehend the significance of things. They do not grow weary nor miss step, nor do they fall out of rank and sink by the wayside to be left contemplating the moving procession.

Ah! that moving procession that has left me by the road-side! Its fantastic colors are more brilliant and beautiful than the sun on the undulating waters. What matter if souls and bodies are falling beneath the feet of the ever-pressing multitude! it moves with the majestic rhythm of the spheres. Its discordant clashes sweep upward in one harmonious tone that blends with the music of other worlds—to complete God's orchestra.

It is greater than the stars—that moving procession of human energy; greater than the palpitating earth and the things growing thereon. Oh! I could weep at being left by the wayside; left with the grass and the clouds and a few dumb animals. True, I feel at home in the society of these symbols of life's immutability. In the procession I should feel the crushing feet, the clashing discords, the ruthless hands and stifling breath. I could not hear the rhythm of the march.

Salve! ye dumb hearts. Let us be still and wait by the roadside.

The mood of this reflection passed. She visited Louisiana for the last time during December 1899, and wrote a hearty description of this experience as "A December Day in Dixie." The Acadian wife and Emile, her luckless husband, might have furnished material for a splendid short story.

A DECEMBER DAY IN DIXIE

The train was an hour and a half late. I failed to hear any complaints on that score from the few passengers who disembarked with me at Cypress Junction at 6:30 A.M. and confronted an icy blast that would better have stayed where it came from. But there was Emile Sautier's saloon just across the tracks, flaunting an alluring sign that offered to hungry wayfarers ham and eggs, fried chicken, oysters and delicious coffee at any hour.

Emile's young wife was as fat and dirty as a little pig that has slept over time in an untidy sty. Possibly she had slept under the stove; the night must have been cold. She told us Emile had come home "boozy" the night before from town. She told it before his very face and he never said a word—only went ahead pouring coal-oil on the fire that wouldn't burn. She wore over her calico dress a heavy cloth jacket with huge pearl buttons and enormous puffed sleeves, and a tattered black-white "nubia" twined about her head and shoulders as if she were contemplating a morning walk. It is impossible for me to know what her intentions were. She stood in the doorway with her little dirty, fat ring-bedecked hands against the frame, seeming to guard the approach to an adjacent apartment, in which there was a cooking stove, a bed and other articles of domestic convenience.

"Yas, he come home boozy, Emile, he don' care, him; dat's nuttin to him w'at happen'."

In his indifference to fate, the youth had lost an eye, a summer or two ago, and now he was saving no coal-oil for the lamps.

We were clamoring for coffee. Any one of us was willing to forego the fried chicken, that was huddled outside under a slanting, icy board; or the oysters, that had never got off the train; or the ham that was grunting beneath the house; or the eggs, which were possibly out where the chicken was,—but we did want coffee.

Emile made us plenty of it, black as ink, since no one cared for the condensed milk which he offered with the sugar.

We could hear the chattering of a cherub in the next room where the bed and cook stove were. And when the piggish little mother went in to dress it, what delicious prattle of Cadian French! what gurgling and suppressed laughter! One of my companions—there were three of us, two Natchitoches men and myself—one of them related an extraordinary experience which the infant had endured a month or two before. He had fallen into an old unused cistern a great distance from the house. In falling through the tangled brush that covered it, he had been caught beneath the arms by some protecting limbs, and thus insecurely sustained he had called and wailed for two hours before help came.

"Yas" said his mother who had come back into the room "'is face was black like de stove w'en we fine 'im. 'An de cistern was all fill up wid lizard' an' snake'. It was one big snake all curl up on de udder en' de branch, lookin' at 'im de whole time." His little swarthy, rosy, moon-face beamed cheerfully at us from over his mother's shoulder, and his black eyes glittered like a squirrel's. I wondered how he had lived through those two hours of suffering and terror. But the little children's world is so unreal, that no doubt it is often difficult for them to distinguish between the life of the imagination and of reality.

In February 1900 she re-wrote the descriptive ending of the account of her "Dixie" article and sent it to *The Youth's Companion* with this letter. The editor possibly thought the description effective; at any rate, he sent the author a check for $10.00, but never printed the article. He even changed her altered title, "One Day in Winter," to "A Louisiana Snow."

Editor the Companion
Dear Sir:

I can't imagine that you will care for this little sketch, or impression of one snowy day last winter when I arrived in Natchitoches, but I send it anyway, hoping that you might. The impression of that snowy day in the old Southern town and the snow in the forest and upon the cotton fields was fantastic and beautiful and I cannot forget it.

Most sincerely yours,

KATE CHOPIN

February 15th 1900

A LOUISIANA SNOW

The train was an hour and a half late, but I heard no complaint from any one of my few fellow passengers who boarded the "Natchitoches Tap" that wintry morning at Cypress Junction. It is true we had been fortified with a steaming hot cup of coffee at Sautier's "saloon" across the tracks; and then, there was the snow!

The earth was covered with two or three inches of it; as white, as dazzling, as soft as northern snow and ten times more beautiful.

Snow upon and beneath the moss-draped branches of the forest; snow along the black bayou's edges, powdering the low pointed, thick palmetto; white snow, and the fields upon fields of white cotton bursting from dry bolls!

The Natchitoches train sped leisurely through the still country, so white, and I longed for some companion to sit beside me who would feel the marvelous and strange beauty of the scene as I did. My neighbor was a gentleman of too practical a turn.

"Oh! the cotton and the snow!" I almost screamed as the first vision of a white cotton field appeared.

"Yes, the lazy rascals; won't pick a lock of it; cotton at four cents, 'what's the use?' they say."

"What's the use" I agreed. How cold and inky black the negroes looked standing in the white patches.

"You'll see cotton in the fields all along here and down through the bayou Natchez country."

"It isn't earthly! it's fairyland!"

"Don't know what the planters are going to do unless they turn half the land into pasture and start raising cattle. What you going to do with that Cane river plantation of yours?"

"Goodness knows. I wonder if it looks like this. Do you think they've picked the cotton?"

Well, some friendly soul should have warned us to keep out of Natchitoches town. The people were all stark mad. The snow had gone to their heads.

"Keep them curtains shut tight," admonished the driver of the sepulchral old "hack" that dragged us from the station. "They dont know what they about. They just as lief pelt us to death as not."

The horses plunged in their break-neck speed; the driver swore deep under his breath; missiles rained against the protecting curtains; the shrieks and yells outside were demoniac, blood-curdling.

There was no court that day; judges and lawyers were rolling in the snow with the boys and girls. There was no school that day; the professors at the Normal—those from the Northern states—were showing off and getting the worst of it. The nuns up on the hill and their little charges were like march hares.

Barred doors were no protection if an unguarded window had been forgotten. The sanctity of home and person was a myth to be demolished with pelting, melting, showering, suffocating snow.

But the next day the sun came out and the snow all went away except where bits of it lay here and there in protected roof angles. The magnolia leaves gleamed and seemed to smile in the sunshine. Hardy rose vines clinging to old stuccoed pillars plumed themselves and bristled their leaves with satisfaction. And the violets peeped out to see if it was all over.

A third group of short stories to be called from the initial one of the collection, *A Vocation and A Voice,* had been accepted by Way and Williams of Chicago in 1898. The volume did not appear. The fate of the manuscript with the list of the proposed contents is given in her note-book as follows:

A VOCATION AND A VOICE
Collection
To Way and Williams '98
Accepted
Transferred to H. S. Stone Nov. '98
R[eturned] Feb. 1900

No reason is given for the return. Perhaps the bitter reception given *The Awakening,* though the novel sold well, intimidated the publishers.

The collection was to have contained these titles:

A Vocation and a Voice, Elizabeth Stock's One Story, Two Portraits, An Idle Fellow, A Mental Suggestion, An Egyptian Cigarette, The White Eagle, Story of an Hour, Two Summers and Two Souls, Sketches, The Unexpected, Her Letters, The Kiss, Suzette, Fedora, The Recovery, The Blind Man, A Morning's Walk, Lilacs, Ti Démon, The Godmother.

In the autumn of 1903 Kate Chopin changed her residence from the home on Morgan Street where she had done all her writing to a house in the newer part of the city, 4232 McPherson Avenue.

The external interests of her life centered in the St. Louis World's Fair. She obtained one of the first season tickets and after the Fair opened spent most of every day there, generally alone, viewing its wonders. Her insatiable curiosity of mind and feeling actually reveled in the manifestations of life and human energy to be seen in the Exhibitions. She felt and said that to her and to the city of St. Louis the World's Fair was a possession, the beauty of which she would take to her heart. The breadth and scope of it enlarged and exalted her spirit. All the world was nearer to her.

She felt a gain in culture from contact with the world's best thought and effort, she drew inspiration from the syntheses of civilization spread before her in the great magic city. She would learn something of art; of life even among strange nations and wild tribes, while responding to a new-born sense of the life of art. To her children and her friends she joyously expressed the uplift she felt at times when her eye caught the Fair *ensemble* in a certain magical, semi-mystical light that flashed to her mind a mood detached from the sordid practical. This outer vision gave her the glow and warmth of an inner vision that did not fade or cool.

The unaccustomed exertion and excitement of daily visits to the World's Fair brought its results. On Saturday, August 20th, 1904, she returned home particularly satisfied though very tired, and she complained of a severe pain in her head. At midnight she called her son Jean. When he reached her side she was unconscious. During Sunday afternoon she recognized her children and talked a while. There was a hope for her recovery.

Sunday night she lapsed into unconsciousness again, and died at noon Monday, August 22, 1904.

At 9 o'clock on the morning of August 24, Father Francis Gilfillan, the present Bishop of St. Joseph, Missouri, then an assistant rector of the new Cathedral of St. Louis the King, celebrated a Requiem Mass and read the burial service in the Cathedral Chapel.

Kate Chopin is buried in Calvary Cemetery on the Way of the Second Dolor. A tall lilac bush, her favorite flower and shrub, casts its shadow over the granite headstone that marks her grave with an inscription as unostentatious as her life.

KATE CHOPIN
February 1851
August 1904

Part II

SHORT STORIES

WISER THAN A GOD[1]

" To love and be wise is scarcely granted even to a god."
Latin Proverb.

I

" YOU MIGHT at least show some distaste for the task, Paula," said Mrs. Von Stoltz, in her querulous invalid voice, to her daughter who stood before the glass bestowing a few final touches of embellishment upon an otherwise plain toilet.

" And to what purpose, Mutterchen? The task is not entirely to my liking, I'll admit; but there can be no question as to its results, which you even must concede are gratifying."

" Well, it's not the career your poor father had in view for you. How often he has told me when I complained that you were kept too closely at work, ' I want that Paula shall be at the head,' " with an appealing look through the window and up into the gray, November sky into that far " somewhere," which might be the abode of her departed husband.

" It isn't a career at all, mama; it's only a make-shift," answered the girl, noting the happy effect of an amber pin that she had thrust through the coils of her lustrous yellow hair. " The pot must be kept boiling at all hazards, pending the appearance of that hoped-for career. And you forget that an occasion like this gives me the very opportunities I want."

" I can't see the advantages of bringing your talent down to such banal servitude. Who are those people, anyway? "

The mother's question ended in a cough which shook her into speechless exhaustion.

" Ah! I have let you sit too long by the window, mother," said Paula, hastening to wheel the invalid's chair nearer the grate fire that was throwing genial light and warmth into the room, turning its plainness to beauty as by a touch of enchantment. " By the way," she added, having arranged her mother as comfortably as might be, "I haven't yet qualified for that 'banal servitude,' as you call it." And approaching the piano which stood in a distant alcove of the room, she took up a roll of music that lay curled up on the instrument, and straightened it out before her. Then, seeming to remember the question which her mother had asked, turned on the stool to answer it. "Don't you know? The Brainards, very swell people, and awfully rich. The daughter is that girl whom I once told you about, having gone to the Conservatory to cultivate her voice and old Engfelder told her in his brusque way to go back home, that his system was not equal to overcoming impossibilities."

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[1] Written June 1889; published in *The Musical Journal*, December, 1889.

"Oh, those people."

"Yes; this little party is given in honor of the son's return from Yale or Harvard, or some place or other." And turning to the piano she softly ran over the dances, whilst the mother gazed into the fire with unresigned sadness, which the bright music seemed to deepen.

"Well, there'll be no trouble about *that,"* said Paula, with comfortable assurance, having ended the last waltz. "There's nothing here to tempt me into flights of originality; there'll be no difficulty in keeping to the hand-organ effect."

"Don't leave me with those dreadful impressions, Paula; my poor nerves are on edge."

"You are too hard on the dances, mamma. There are certain strains here and there that I thought not bad."

"It's your youth that finds it so; I have outlived such illusions."

"What an inconsistent little mother it is!" the girl exclaimed, laughing. "You told me only yesterday it was my youth that was so impatient with the commonplace happenings of everyday life. That age, needing to seek its delights, finds them often in unsuspected places, wasn't that it?"

"Don't chatter, Paula; some music, some music!"

"What shall it be?" asked Paula, touching a succession of harmonious chords. "It must be short."

" The ' Berceuse,' then; Chopin's. But soft, soft and a little slowly as your dear father used to play it."

Mrs. Von Stoltz leaned her head back amongst the cushions, and with eyes closed, drank in the wonderful strains that came like an ethereal voice out of the past, lulling her spirit into the quiet of sweet memories.

When the last soft notes had melted into silence, Paula approached her mother and looking into the pale face saw that tears stood beneath the closed eyelids. " Ah! mamma, I have made you unhappy," she cried in distress.

" No, my child; you have given me a joy that you don't dream of. I have no more pain. Your music has done for me what Faranelli's singing did for poor King Philip of Spain; it has cured me."

There was a glow of pleasure on the warm face and the eyes with almost the brightness of health. " Whilst I listened to you, Paula, my soul went out from me and lived again through an evening long ago. We were in our pretty room at Leipsic. The soft air and the moonlight came through the open-curtained window, making a quivering fret-work along the gleaming waxed floor. You lay in my arms and I felt again the pressure of your warm, plump little body against me. Your father was at the piano playing the ' Berceuse,' and all at once you drew my head down and whispered, ' Ist es nicht wonderschen, mama? ' When it ended, you were sleeping and your father took you from my arms and laid you gently in bed."

Paula knelt beside her mother, holding the frail hands which she kissed tenderly.

" Now you must go, liebchen. Ring for Berta, she will do all that is needed. I feel very strong to-night. But do not come back too late."

" I shall be home as early as possible; likely in the last car, I couldn't stay longer or I should have to walk. You know the house in case there should be need to send for me? "

" Yes, yes; but there will be no need."

Paula kissed her mother lovingly and went out into the drear November night with the roll of dances under her arm.

II

The door of the stately mansion at which Paula rang was opened by a footman, who invited her to "kindly walk upstairs."

"Show the young lady into the music room, James," called from some upper region a voice, doubtless the same whose impossibilities had been so summarily dealt with by Herr Engfelder, and Paula was led through a suite of handsome apartments, the warmth and mellow light of which were very grateful, after the chill out-door air.

Once in the music room, she removed her wraps and seated herself comfortably to await developments. Before her stood the magnificent "Steinway" on which her eyes rested with greedy admiration, and her fingers twitched with a desire to awaken its inviting possibilities. The odor of flowers impregnated the air like a subtle intoxicant and over everything hung a quiet smile of expectancy, disturbed by an occasional feminine flutter above stairs, or muffled suggestions of distant household sounds.

Presently, a young man entered the drawing-room,—no doubt, the college student, for he looked critically and with an air of proprietorship at the festive arrangements, venturing the bestowal of a few improving touches. Then, gazing with pardonable complacency at his own handsome, athletic figure in the mirror, he saw reflected Paula looking at him, with a demure smile lighting her blue eyes.

"By Jove!" was his startled exclamation. Then, approaching, "I beg pardon, Miss—Miss—"

"Von Stoltz."

"Miss Von Stoltz," drawing the right conclusion from her simple toilet and the roll of music. "I hadn't seen you when I came in. Have you been here long? and sitting all alone, too? That's certainly rough."

" Oh, I've been here but a few moments, and was very well entertained."

" I dare say," with a glance full of prognostic complimentary utterances, which a further acquaintance might develop.

As he was lighting the gas of a side bracket that she might better see to read her music, Mrs. Brainard and her daughter came into the room, radiantly attired, and both approached Paula with sweet and polite greeting.

" George, in mercy! " exclaimed his mother, " put out that gas, you are killing the effect of the candle light."

" But Miss Von Stoltz can't read her music without it, mother."

" I've no doubt Miss Von Stoltz knows her pieces by heart," Mrs. Brainard replied, seeking corroboration from Paula's glance.

" No, madam; I'm not accustomed to playing dance music, and this is quite new to me," the girl rejoined, touching the loose sheets that George had conveniently straightened out and placed on the rack.

" Oh, dear! 'not accustomed'? " said Miss Brainard. " And Mr. Sohmeir told us he knew you would give satisfaction."

Paula hastened to re-assure the thoroughly alarmed young lady on the point of her ability to give perfect satisfaction.

The door bell now began to ring incessantly. Up the stairs, tripped fleeting opera-cloaked figures, followed by their black-robed attendants. The rooms commenced to fill with the pretty hubbub that a bevy of girls can make when inspired by a close masculine proximity; and Paula, not waiting to be asked, struck the opening bars of an inspiring waltz.

Some hours later, during a lull in the dancing, when the men were making vigorous applications of fans and handkerchiefs; and the girls beginning to throw themselves into attitudes of picturesque exhaustion—save for the always indefatigable few —a proposition was ventured, backed by clamorous entreaties, which induced George to bring forth his banjo. And an agreeable moment followed, in which that young man's skill met with a truly deserving applause. Never had his audience beheld such proficiency as he displayed in the handling of his instrument, which was now behind him, now overhead, and again swinging in mid-air like the pendulum of a clock and sending forth the sounds of stirring melody. Sounds so inspiring that a pretty little black-eyed fairy, an acknowledged votary of Terpsichore, and George's particular admiration, was moved to contribute a few passes of a Virginia break-down, as she had studied it from life on a Southern plantation. The act closing amid a spontaneous babel of hand clapping and admiring bravos.

It must be admitted that this little episode, however graceful, was hardly a fitting prelude to the magnificent "Jewel Song from 'Faust,'" with which Miss Brainard next consented to regale the company. That Miss Brainard possessed a voice, was a fact that had existed as matter of tradition in the family as far back almost as the days of that young lady's baby utterances, in which loving ears had already detected the promise which time had so recklessly fulfilled.

True genius is not to be held in abeyance, though a host of Engfelders would rise to quell it with their mundane protests!

Miss Brainard's rendition was a triumphant achievement of sound, and with the proud flush of success moving her to kind condescension, she asked Miss Von Stoltz to "please play something."

Paula amiably consented, choosing a selection from the Modern Classic. How little did her auditors appreciate in the performance the results of a life study, of a drilling that had made her amongst the knowing an acknowledged mistress of technique. But to her skill she added the touch and interpretation of the artist; and in hearing her, even Ignorance paid to her genius the tribute of a silent motion.

When she arose there was a moment of quiet, which was broken by the black-eyed fairy, always ready to cast herself into a breach, observing, flippantly, "How pretty!" "Just lovely!" from another; and "What wouldn't I give to play like that." Each inane compliment falling like a dash of cold water on Paula's ardor.

She then became solicitous about the hour, with reference to her car, and George who stood near looked at his watch and informed her that the last car had gone by a full half hour before.

" But," he added, " if you are not expecting any one to call for you, I will gladly see you home."

" I expect no one, for the car that passes here would have set me down at my door," and in this avowal of difficulties, she tacitly accepted George's offer.

The situation was new. It gave her a feeling of elation to be walking through the quiet night with this handsome young fellow. He talked so freely and so pleasantly. She felt such a comfort in his strong protective nearness. In clinging to him against the buffets of the staggering wind she could feel the muscles of his arms like steel.

He was so unlike any man of her acquaintance. Strictly unlike Poldorf, the pianist, the short rotundity of whose person could have been less objectionable, if she had not known its cause to lie in an inordinate consumption of beer. Old Engfelder, with his long hair, his spectacles and his loose, disjointed figure, was hors de combat in comparison. And of Max Kuntzler, the talented composer, her teacher of harmony, she could at the moment think of no positive point of objection against him, save the vague, general, serious one of his unlikeness to George.

Her new-awakened admiration, though, was not deaf to a little inexplicable wish that he had not been so proficient with the banjo.

On they went chatting gaily, until turning the corner of the street in which she lived, Paula saw that before the door stood Dr. Sinn's buggy.

Brainard could feel the quiver of surprised distress that shook her frame, as she said, hurrying along, " Oh! mamma must be ill—worse; they have called the doctor."

Reaching the house, she threw open wide the door that was unlocked, and he stood hesitatingly back. The gas in the small hall burned at its full, and showed Berta at the top of the stairs, speechless, with terrified eyes, looking down at her. And coming to meet her, was a neighbor, who strove with well-meaning solicitude to keep her back, to hold her yet a moment in ignorance of the cruel blow that fate had dealt her whilst she had in happy unconsciousness played her music for the dance.

III

Several months had passed since the dreadful night when death had deprived Paula for the second time of a loved parent.

After the first shock of grief was over, the girl had thrown all her energies into work, with the view of attaining that position in the musical world which her father and mother had dreamed might be hers.

She had remained in the small home occupying now but the half of it; and here she kept house with the faithful Berta's aid.

Friends were both kind and attentive to the stricken girl. But there had been two, whose constant devotion spoke of an interest deeper than mere friendly solicitude.

Max Kuntzler's love for Paula was something that had taken hold of his sober middle age with an enduring strength which was not to be lessened or shaken, by her rejection of it. He had asked leave to remain her friend, and while holding the tender, watchful privileges which that comprehensive title may imply, had refrained from further thrusting a warmer feeling on her acceptance.

Paula one evening was seated in her small sitting-room, working over some musical transpositions, when a ring at the bell was followed by a footstep in the hall which made her hand and heart tremble.

George Brainard entered the room, and before she could rise to greet him, had seated himself in the vacant chair beside her.

"What an untiring worker you are," he said, glancing down at the scores before her. "I always feel that my presence interrupts you; and yet I don't know that a judicious interruption isn't the wholesomest thing for you sometimes."

"You forget," she said, smiling into his face, "that I was trained to it. I must keep myself fitted to my calling. Rest would mean deterioration."

"Would you not be willing to follow some other calling?" he asked, looking at her with unusual earnestness in his dark, handsome eyes.

"Oh, never!"

"Not if it were a calling that asked only for the labor of loving?"

She made no answer, but kept her eyes fixed on the idle traceries that she drew with her pencil on the sheets before her.

He arose and made a few impatient turns about the room, then coming again to her side, said abruptly:

"Paula, I love you. It isn't telling you something that you don't know, unless you have been without bodily perceptions. To-day there is something driving me to speak it out in words. Since I have known you," he continued, striving to look into her face that bent low over the work before her, "I have been mounting into higher and always higher circles of Paradise, under a blessed illusion that you—cared for me. But to-day, a feeling of dread has been forcing itself upon me—dread that with a word you might throw me back into a gulf that would now be one of everlasting misery. Say if you love me, Paula. I believe you do, and yet I wait with indefinable doubts for your answer."

He took her hand which she did not withdraw from his.

"Why are you speechless? Why don't you say something to me!" he asked desperately.

"I am speechless with joy and misery," she answered. "To know that you love me, gives me happiness enough to brighten a lifetime. And I am miserable, feeling that you have spoken the signal that must part us."

"You love me, and speak of parting. Never! You will be my wife. From this moment we belong to each other. Oh, my Paula," he said, drawing her to his side, "my whole existence will be devoted to your happiness."

"I can't marry you," she said shortly, disengaging his hand from her waist.

"Why?" he asked abruptly. They stood looking into each other's eyes.

"Because it doesn't enter into my purpose of life."

"I don't ask you to give up anything in your life. I only beg you to let me share it with you."

George had known Paula only as a daughter of the undemonstrative American woman. He had never before seen her with the father's emotional nature aroused in her. The color mounted into her cheeks, and her blue eyes were almost black with intensity of feeling.

"Hush," she said; "don't tempt me further." And she cast herself on her knees before the table near which they stood, gathering the music that lay upon it into an armful, and resting her hot cheek upon it.

"What do you know of my life," she exclaimed passionately, "What can you guess of it? Is music anything more to you than the pleasing distraction of an idle moment? Can't you feel that with me, it courses with the blood through my veins? That it's something dearer than life, than riches, even than love?" with a quiver of pain.

"Paula, listen to me; don't speak like a mad woman!"

She sprang up and held out an arm to ward away his nearer approach.

"Would you go into a convent, and ask to be your wife a nun who has vowed herself to the service of God?" asked Paula.

"Yes, if that nun loved me; she would owe to herself, to me and to God to be my wife."

Paul seated herself on the sofa, all emotion seeming suddenly to have left her; and he came and sat beside her.

"Say only that you love me, Paula," he urged persistently.

" I love you," she answered low and with pale lips.

He took her in his arms, holding her in silent rapture against his heart and kissing the white lips back into red life.

" You will be my wife? "

" You must wait. Come back in a week and I will answer you." He was forced to be content with the delay.

The days of probation being over, George went for his answer, which was given him by the old lady who occupied the upper story.

" Ach Gott! Fräulein Von Stoltz ist schon nach Leipsic gegangen! "

All that has not been many years ago. George Brainard is as handsome as ever, though growing a little stout in the quiet routine of domestic life. He has quite lost a pretty taste for music that formerly distinguished him as a skilful banjoist. This loss his little black-eyed wife deplores; though she herself made concessions to the advancing years, and abandoned Virginia break-downs as incompatible with the serious offices of wifehood and matrimony.

You may have seen in the morning paper, that the renowned pianist, Fräulein Paula Von Stoltz, is resting in Leipsic after an extended and remunerative concert tour.

Professor Max Kuntzler is also in Leipsic, with the ever persistent will—the dogged patience that so often wins in the end.

AN EMBARRASSING POSITION[1]

Comedy in One Act

CHARACTERS

MISS EVA ARTLESS—Brought up on unconventional and startling lines by eccentric father, a retired army officer.

MR. WILLIS PARKHAM—Wealthy young bachelor. Candidate for a public office.

MR. COOL LATELY—Reporter for the *Paul Pry.*

CATO—Respectable negro servitor.

SCENE—Snuggery in Willis Parkham's suburban residence.

TIME—11:30 P.M.

Parkham stands with back to open fire lighting cigar. Cato busily engaged removing evidences of a jovial bachelor gathering.

PARKHAM: Never mind, Cato; leave all that till morning.

CATO: Marse Will's, you ten' to yo' business: I g'ine ten' to mine. Dat away to save trouble.

PARKHAM: (*Laughs good-naturedly.*) It never occurs to you to take liberties, does it, Cato?

CATO: I never takes nuttin' w'at don' b'long to me, Marse Will's. But what I despises hits to come in heah of a mornin' an' find de bottles an' glasses scatter roun' like nine pins; de kiards an' poker chips layin' 'bout loose. An' dis heah w'at you all calls a p'litical meetin'!

PARKHAM: (*Seats himself in easy chair and picks up book from table.*) One name'll do as well as another for a poker game, Cato. Now see that everything is well closed. It's turning cold and seems to be blowing a blizzard outside.

CATO: Yas, suh, de groun' all done kiver up wid snow; an' hits fallin' like fedders outen a busted fedder bed. (*Exit with tray, glasses, etc., limping painfully and affectedly.*)

[1] Written October 1891; published in *Reedy's Mirror,* December 19, 1895.

PARKHAM: (*Settles back in easy chair for a quiet read.*) Talk of being ruled with an iron rod! (*Door bell rings.*) At this hour! a caller! who in perdition can it be! (*Hurries to open the door himself and ushers in a handsome, sprightly young girl holding, with difficulty, a dripping umbrella, handbag; cat and small dog—one under each arm. Wears a feathered hat tied under chin, and long costly circular.*)

PARKHAM: (*Excitedly.*) Eva Artless!

EVA: Yes, I knew you'd be astonished. I just knew you would—at this time of night. Here, take my umbrella and bag, please. (*Parkham takes them. Closes umbrella and sets it to one side.*)

PARKHAM: You're right, I'm perfectly amazed.

EVA: I knew you'd be delighted, too.

PARKHAM: (*Uncertainly.*) Oh, I am charmed. But has anything happened? The Major'll be along presently, I suppose, in a few—moments?

EVA: The Major! Do you think I'd have come if the Major were home? Take that telegram from my belt. I can't with Zizi and Booboo. Do you see it, the end sticking up, there?

PARKHAM: This is it? (*Draws paper gingerly from Eva's belt.*)

EVA: That's it. Read it. Read it aloud and see.

PARKHAM: (*Reads telegram.*) "Dearest Eva."

EVA: Just like a letter, "Dearest Eva." Poor, sweet papa; the first telegram I ever had from him. Go on.

PARKHAM: "Dearest Eva"—

EVA: You read that.

PARKHAM: So I did. "Accident and obstruction on tracks below. Shall be detained here till noon to-morrow. Am in despair at thought of you remaining alone till then. May heaven have you in keeping till return of your distracted father."

EVA: "Distracted father." Heigh-ho. Put it back in my belt, please, Willis. (*Parkham replaces the telegram awkwardly and with difficulty.*) So when I got it, naturally, I was distracted too.

PARKHAM: When did it come?

EVA: About an hour ago. Untie my hat and circular, will you? (*Parkham does as she bids, and places things on chair.*) Thanks. (*Caresses dog and cat alternately.*) My poor Zizi; my sweet Booboo; 'oo was jus' as s'eepy as 'oo tould be, so 'oo was. Won't you kindly give them a little corner for the night, Willis? You know I *couldn't* leave them behind.

PARKHAM: Let me have them. (*Takes pets by back of the neck—one in each hand, and proceeds towards room to right. Pushes door open and deposits Booboo and Zizi within, closes door and rejoins Eva, who has seated herself.*) May I learn now, Eva, to what I owe the distinction of this unexpected visit?

EVA: Why, as I said before, you owe it to papa's unavoidable absence. Finding that I was destined, for the first time in my life, to spend a night apart from him, and knowing him to be distracted about it, as you read yourself, I naturally sat down to do a little thinking on my own account.

PARKHAM: Oh, you did? A little original thinking, as it were?

EVA: Yes, entirely original. I thought, " Now, what would papa want me to do under the circumstances? " Why, simply this: " Go and spend the night at the home of one of our friends, Eva."

PARKHAM: Now, I think you are entirely mistaken. I can't for a moment believe that your father would advise you to do any such thing.

EVA: (*With mock loftiness.*) Do you presume to know Major Artless better than his own daughter does, Mr. Willis Parkham?

PARKHAM: I know him quite well enough to feel sure of what I say. Since my boyhood, and the death of my own father, I have had much of his confidence, and he has had all of mine.

EVA: (*Emphatically.*) That is precisely it. So in casting about among my father's friends for a possible night's refuge, I said to myself, "There is no one whom father esteems so highly or loves so well as Willis Parkham."

PARKHAM: (*Aside.*) Would to Heaven he had loved me less. (*Aloud.*) And you mean to tell me, Eva, that you have come here to my house with the intention of spending the night?"

EVA: Certainly—that is, part of it, for the night must be half gone. And it's ever such a lark, too—coming through the night and the snow. I just thought to myself how nice it would be to sleep in that lovely guest-chamber of yours.

PARKHAM: (*Forgetting his dilemma.*) It's been all refitted. It's charming; you wouldn't know it.

EVA: Oh—how nice! Then to get up in the morning and take breakfast with you; you on one side of the table, I, on the other.

PARKHAM: (*Still forgetful.*) No, I should sit beside you.

EVA: Well, just as you please, but papa always sits opposite—I pouring your coffee—I say, "Sugar and cream, Willis? how many lumps?"

PARKHAM: (*Still forgetful.*) Two lumps.

EVA: Only two? Then we pass things to each other. I ring for Cato: "Cato, bring hot buttered toast for Marse Willis, and the morning paper at once."

PARKHAM: (*Still forgetful.*) I'm very fond of buttered toast with the morning paper and hot coffee.

EVA: Yes, with coffee; isn't it nice?

PARKHAM: (*Still forgetful.*) It would all be delicious. (*Suddenly remembers.*) But it can't be! (*Dejectedly.*)

EVA: (*Goes to table on which tray rests.*) This talk about breakfast has made me hungry. (*Pours herself small glass of sherry and nibbles cracker with it.*) Why can't it be?

PARKHAM: Believe me when I tell you, simply, that it can't—it mustn't be.

EVA: (*Lays down cracker and glass. Looks down mournfully.*) Then I have made a mistake; you are not glad that I came.

PARKHAM: (*Approaches and takes her hand.*) Oh, don't say that. There's no one in the world whom I want to see always, so much as you. And it's because I do, and because I'm your friend and your father's friend, that I say you had better not be here.

EVA: (*Withdraws her hand coldly. With tears in her voice.*) Very well, I shall leave without delay. You have a telephone, I believe. Will you kindly ring at once for a carriage?

PARKHAM: Why not your own? I would offer mine.

EVA: I wouldn't trouble you so far, sir. My coachman is ill with la grippe. I came in a carriage from the city stand; I can return in one, I'm sure.

PARKHAM: Oh, you didn't come in your own carriage? Your coachman—your servants perhaps do not know that you are here?

EVA: (*Impatiently.*) No one knows I am here, but you. (*Goes toward her cloak, which she tentatively offers to put on. Furtively wipes corner of her eye with pocket handkerchief.*)

PARKHAM: (*Aside—reflectively.*) So no one knows she's here. That presents the matter in a less difficult light. (*Steals a glance towards her dejected figure.*) She shall stay! (*with sudden resolution.*) Her father will understand, and he trusts me absolutely. Her presence here I can manage to keep from the knowledge of others. (*Goes towards her.*) Eva! (*A little penitently.*)

EVA: Well?

PARKHAM: Don't mind, please, what I said.

EVA: (*With indignant reproach.*) Don't mind that; you said or implied I would better have stayed home! Perhaps you want me to forget that you said I ought not to have come?

PARKHAM: Yes. You'll forget it, won't you?

EVA: Never!

PARKHAM: (*Attempting to take her hand.*) Oh, you will; because I ask you; because I beg you to. I want you to stay to-night under my roof; to sleep in the guest-chamber that you like so. And I want you to believe that it will be doing me a pleasure—an honor, that I shall remember always. You will, Eva? Say that you will?

EVA: (*Relenting.*) It was very unkind, and unfriendly, Willis; papa wouldn't have treated you so.

PARKHAM: Oh, I know it seemed a savage thing to say. Some day perhaps, Eva, I may explain it all, if you will give me the right to. (*Door bell rings. Parkham starts violently. Walks for a moment distractedly about. Aside.*) Heavens! Gadsby! Dodswell! some idiot that would better never have been born! (*Bell rings second time.*)

EVA: Don't you hear the bell, Willis? Has Cato gone to bed?

PARKHAM: (*Incoherently.*) No; yes—I'll open the door myself. It's a man I'm expecting on important business.

EVA: (*Astonished.*) Important business now? Almost midnight.

PARKHAM: I always—that is I generally attend to business at that hour. May I ask you to go into this room—(*going towards door to right*)—while he is here?

EVA: Why, certainly. Will he be long, do you suppose?

PARKHAM: Only a few moments. (*Bell rings third time. Opens door for Eva.* (*Exit Eva.*) *Parkham then opens folding doors and outer door. Enter, Mr. Cool Lately, stamping and brushing off the snow.*)

COOL LATELY: I've had the pleasure of meeting you before, Mr. Parkham; dare say you have forgotten. Permit me—this card may possibly help to refresh your memory. (*Hands card to Parkham.*)

PARKHAM: (*Reads.*) Mr. Cool Lately.

COOL LATELY: Reporter, occasional paragraphist, and special interviewer on staff of *Paul Pry!*

PARKHAM: I can't recall the name, though your face is not unfamiliar. Let me ask you to state as briefly as you can the business which brings you to my house at so unseasonable an hour.

COOL LATELY: Only too happy to do so, Mr. Parkham. (*Seats himself in a chair indicated by Parkham.*) Since you mention unseasonable hour, my theory is, that hours are all one, or ought to be, to a man in public life.

PARKHAM: I don't know how it may be to a man in public life, but to a man in private life they are certainly not all one.

COOL LATELY: Only your modest way of putting it, Mr. Parkham; for you know you are at present an object of special interest to the public. Your friend, Mr. Dodswell, kindly dropped into the *Paul Pry* office on his return from the informal political gathering which he tells us assembled here tonight—

PARKHAM: (*Aside.*) Damn Dodswell!

COOL LATELY: And in which you positively decline to represent your party before the convention, and formulated your reasons for doing so. Now—

PARKHAM: It appears to me that Mr. Dodswell's information has fully covered the ground.

COOL LATELY: By no means, my dear Mr. Parkham, by no means. Having this amount of good inside information on hand, naturally we thirsted for more. The hour was late, to be sure, and it was snowing—obstacles, I'll admit, but to men in my profession obstacles exist only to be overcome. I jumped into a cab; away I drove; saw the light in the vestibule—

PARKHAM: (*Aside.*) Hang the light in the vestibule—

COOL LATELY: Rang the bell, and here I am. (*Cool Lately has observed through his eye-glasses, rather closely, details of the apartment whilst talking. Parkham sees that he has perceived Eva's cloak and hat on chair.*)

PARKMAN: (*With forced laugh.*) Servants will take liberties in bachelor establishments, Mr. Lately. You see where my house-maid chooses to deposit her toggery during my absence?

COOL LATELY: (*Aside.*) Housemaid is good.

PARKMAN: But, let us make haste to dispose of this little interview as quickly as possible.

COOL LATELY: (*Takes notebook from pocket and sharpens pencil.*) Now, you're talking, Mr. Parkham.

PARKHAM: I suppose you want briefly my political attitude; reasons for declining this nomination; opinions on the tariff, perhaps, in its relations to our American industries—

COOL LATELY: It's clever (*American sense*) of you, Mr. Parkham, to offer these suggestions; but you are not exactly on to it. No, sir. Anyone can have opinions about the tariff and protection and get them into print, for that matter. It's those little intimate details of a man's life—and daily life, that we want—that appeal to the sympathies of our American public. When, where, how were you born. How many servants do you keep? How many horses? What time do you rise in the morning—if in the morning—and what do you eat for your breakfast? These are merely suggestions, of course, which I throw out—which we can elaborate as we go along and—

EVA: (*Opens door and pokes out her head.*) Pardon me for interrupting; but, Willis come here a moment, please. It's about Booboo's bed; he can't sleep on that hard Axminister rug, don't you know? (*Exit Parkham wildly.*)

COOL LATELY: (*Alone.*) Well, Cool Lately, if this find isn't worth a ten-dollar raise in your salary, I don't know what is. (*Writes rapidly in notebook. Examines circular from all sides, turns it about and feels it. Does same with hat. Finally reads aloud from notes.*) "Corruption in high circles. Mr. Willis Parkham's reasons for declining nomination won't hold water. A lady in the case. Daughter of a well-known retired military officer implicated." A good night's work, Cool Lately. (*Replaces book in pocket. Enter Parkham from right.*) Hem-he (*coughs affectedly*). I see you have Miss Eva Artless for a guest, Mr. Parkham.

PARKHAM: Miss Artless and her father are doing me that honor, sir.

COOL LATELY: Oh. Ah—really now, that's very singular.

PARKHAM: Not at all singular. It happens often that I entertain such old friends at my house for a day or two.

COOL LATELY: Oh, to be sure. It's nothing. I was merely thinking of a telegram that came into the office an hour or two ago from the G. A. R. reunion at Bolton. Must have been a fake.

PARKHAM: (*Vociferously.*) The lady is *not* Miss Artless!

COOL LATELY: Not Miss Artless! Well, upon my word, I could have sworn it was. Nothing so curious and interesting as these cases of mistaken identity.

PARKHAM: (*Driven to the wall.*) The lady is Mrs. Willis Parkham, my wife! Now will you kindly excuse me, Mr. Lately, from any further conversation, and let me bid you good night.

COOL LATELY: Why, Mr. Parkham, you must perceive that this is a highly interesting piece of information. Permit me to present my felicitations, and ask when the happy event was consummated?

PARKHAM: I decline to discuss the subject further. (*Goes towards folding door which he opens.*)

COOL LATELY: I understand then that we have your authority to make public the announcement of your marriage to Miss Eva Artless.

PARKHAM: I have nothing to say. Good evening, Mr. Lately.

COOL LATELY: Good evening, Mr. Parkham. (*Aside*) A rattling good two-column article, all the same. (*Exit Cool Lately. Parkham drags himself, with a chair, in deepest dejection to front of Stage. Seats himself and groans.*) Oh what a situation! *what* a situation! Why couldn't that major have died in his cradle and left this poor girl to be brought up as a rational woman ought to be! But I must act at once. There isn't a moment to lose. Eva Artless has to marry me tonight if she's got to be hypnotized. (*Hurries towards door to left. Opens it and calls.*) Cato! Cato! (*Interval.*) I say, Cato! (*Throws poker, tongs, and finally chair through the door with much clatter.*) Cato!

CATO: (*Appears, holding candle. Very much in disorder, and half awake.*) Did you heah a rakit, Marse Wills? I was dreamin' dat my po' ole 'oman done come back f'orn de distant sho's.

PARKHAM: (*Drags Cato to front of stage.*) Cato, can you be trusted?

CATO: Kin I be trusted! Ef dat aint some'pin putty fur ole Marse Hank Parkham's gran'son to be a axin' Cato! Aint I done ben trested wid mo' gole an' silver 'an you ever sot yo' eyes on?—

PARKHAM: Oh, never mind that story.

CATO:—Dat time down tu de Ridge, w'en we heahed de Yanks a shooting' like all possessed in de hills, an' we knowed dey was a comin'—

PARKHAM: Yes, yes, I know.

CATO:—Ole Marse Hank, he come tu me, an'e he 'low " Cato you's de on'iest one on de place w'at I kin tres "—

PARKHAM: (*Simultaneously with Cato's closing lines. Aside.*) By heavens! for once in my life, I shan't hear that story to its close—

CATO: Take dis heah gole, an' dis heah silver—

PARKHAM: Come, listen, Cato. Not another word. There's very important work to be done here before morning, and you've got to do your share of it. You know where the Rev. Dr. Andrews lives?

CATO: De preacher? Like I aint pass by his house an' his chu'ch an' heahed him kiarrin' on mo' times 'an—

PARKHAM: Very well. I want you to go to his house—

CATO: Tomorrow mo'nin'?

PARKHAM: Now, tonight. Tell him I must see him at once. If he seems reluctant to come, insist. Tell him it's very urgent.

CATO: I musn' tell 'im you gwine crazy, Marse Will's?

PARKHAM: Nothing of the sort. But I depend upon you to bring him. Tell him, if it's necessary, that I'm dying, and want the last consolation of the church before breathing my last—anything to make him come. Now go—and be quick.

CATO: (*Aside.*) All de same, I gwine tell 'im I t'inks po' Marse Will's is losin' 'is mine.

(*Exit Cato to left.*)

PARKHAM: (*Alone.*) Now for the ordeal! Willis Parkham, see if you are man enough to win a woman in a quarter of an hour! (*Knocks upon door to right. Eva opens it.*)

EVA: (*Coming upon stage.*) Well, has your friend gone at last? What a time he staid.

PARKHAM: I don't think I said he was my friend.

EVA: No, it's true. You said business acquaintance. What a nice, intelligent face he has.

PARKHAM: I think he has the countenance of a fiend.

EVA: (*Seats herself on ottoman.*) Oh, well, it doesn't matter. But what night-owls we are. It's jolly to be setting up so late, too—but I don't know if papa would like it.

PARKHAM: (*Stands with folded arms and serious air before the girl.*) Eva, there is something very important I want to speak with you about. A matter of paramount importance, I may say.

EVA: Why, I never saw you quite so important before, Willis.

PARKHAM: And I'm sure, there has never before come so critical a moment in my life. I wish to make you an offer of marriage.

EVA: (*Startled, but quickly dissembles her surprise.*) Oh, indeed! Well, I don't know why, but this appears to me a strange time and place you have chosen to make me a proposal of marriage.

PARKHAM: I have chosen neither the time nor the place; both have been forced upon me.

EVA: (*Emphatically.*) Forced upon you! Well, I declare; forced upon you? Perhaps the whole situation has been forced upon you, too?

PARKHAM: It has.

EVA: I am at a perfect loss to understand why you so suddenly, and in the middle of the night, feel forced to make me an offer of marriage. (*With dignity.*) I simply decline it. Consider yourself rejected.

PARKHAM: (*Resolutely.*) No, I'll consider nothing of the sort.

EVA: Just as you like. You needn't to. I consider you rejected, so it amounts to the same thing.

PARKHAM: Please understand, Eva, that I am moved by no purely selfish motives to urge you to become my wife. I am thinking only of you, of your own coming welfare and happiness. The peace of your whole future life may depend upon your marriage to me. There are reasons why you must be my wife—reasons that are not to be set aside.

EVA: (*Has been boiling over. Laughs hysterically.*) And *this* is an offer of marriage! I never had one before! I never want one again! *So* Mr. Willis Parkham, you think that my future happiness depends upon becoming your wife. Well, permit me to inform you, that you are making a curious mistake. The idea of being your wife has never entered my mind. And so little does my future happiness depend upon your society, that I intend to quit it just as soon as I can. (*A conception of his maladroitness has dawned upon Parkham during the above harangue. He seats himself apart with head buried in his hands. He rises finally and goes to stand behind her—but close to her.*)

PARKHAM: Eva—

EVA: (*With affected weariness.*) Oh, what is it?

PARKHAM: I have another reason for wanting you to marry me; the strongest reason which any man could have for wanting a woman to be his wife. I suppose it is useless, however, to mention it. I have proven myself so clumsy an idiot, that you can never again think of me save with anger and contempt.

EVA: (*Carelessly.*) Oh, I should like to hear it, all the same —I suppose it is fully as startling as the one you have already expressed.

PARKHAM: You have a perfect right to sneer at so great a fool. I am not asking you now to marry me; I only want to tell you how I love you. (*Bending his head close to hers, fervently.*) Oh, how I love you!

EVA: (*Gives a little start of delight, but pretends doubt and indifference.*) Oh, indeed? Another surprising disclosure?

PARKHAM: I knew you'd not believe me. How can I expect you to, after all that has happened?

EVA: No: but these varying moods of yours are interesting. You say you love me.

PARKHAM: To distraction, Eva—

EVA: To distraction! (*Laughs lightly.*)

PARKHAM: (*Distinctly.*) All my life.

EVA: (*Makes figures on the floor with the toe of her boot, for a long moment. Rises suddenly and faces him, seriously and resolutely.*) Willis, how can you say that? You have acted through this whole evening in a way that I can't understand. Now, at the close of it, you tell me that you love me. I want to believe it. But why do you tell me that is has been always? If you do love me, confess, Willis, it has only been for the past hour.

PARKHAM: I have only lived, Eva, for the past hour. (*Eva advances to front and center of stage.*)

PARKHAM: (*Following.*) And you, Eva?

EVA: (*Turns shyly away.*) Oh—I don't know, Willis,—but I believe I have—lived a little longer than that.

(*He takes her in his arms and embraces her tenderly. Cato appears in folding doors. Starts with surprise and turns his back*).

CATO: Heah's de preacher, Marse Will's!

PARKHAM: Oh, tell the minister to enter, Cato.

EVA: The minister!

PARKHAM: To marry us, Eva.

EVA: Now? Tonight?

PARKHAM: Why not tonight rather than tomorrow or a year hence, since we love one another. (*Kisses her hand tenderly.*)

THE DREAM OF AN HOUR[1]

KNOWING that Mrs. Mallard was afflicted with a heart trouble, great care was taken to break to her as gently as possible the news of her husband's death.

It was her sister Josephine who told her, in broken sentences; veiled hints that revealed in half concealing. Her husband's friend Richards was there, too, near her. It was he who had been in the newspaper office when intelligence of the railroad disaster was received, with Brently Mallard's name leading in the list of "killed." He had only taken the time to assure himself of its truth by a second telegram, and had hastened to forestall any less careful, less tender friend in bearing the sad message.

She did not hear the story as many women have heard the same, with a paralyzed inability to accept its significance. She wept at once, with sudden, wild abandonment, in her sister's arms. When the storm of grief had spent itself she went away to her room alone. She would have no one follow her.

There stood, facing the open window, a comfortable, roomy armchair. Into this she sank, pressed down by a physical exhaustion that haunted her body and seemed to reach into her soul.

She could see in the open square before her house the tops of trees that were all aquiver with the new spring life. The delicious breath of rain was in the air. In the street below a peddler was crying his wares. The notes of a distant song which someone was singing reached her faintly, and countless sparrows were twittering in the eaves.

There were patches of blue sky showing here and there through the clouds that had met and piled one above the other in the west facing her window.

She sat with her head thrown back upon the cushion of the chair, quite motionless, except when a sob came up into her throat and shook her, as a child who has cried itself to sleep continues to sob in its dreams.

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[1] Written April 1894; published in *Vogue,* December 6, 1894.

She was young, with a fair, calm face, whose lines bespoke repression and even a certain strength. But now there was a dull stare in her eyes, whose gaze was fixed away off yonder on one of those patches of blue sky. It was not a glance of reflection, but rather indicated a suspension of intelligent thought. There was something coming to her and she was waiting for it, fearfully. What was it? She did not know; it was too subtle and elusive to name. But she felt it, creeping out of the sky, reaching toward her through the sounds, the scents, the color that filled the air.

She was beginning to recognize this thing that was approaching to possess her, and she was striving to beat it back with her will—as powerless as her two slender hands would have been.

When she abandoned herself, a little whispered word escaped her slightly parted lips. She said it over and over under her breath: "Free, free, free!" The vacant stare and the look of terror that had followed it went from her eyes. They stayed deep and bright. Her pulses beat fast, and the coursing blood warmed and relaxed every inch of her body.

She did not stop to ask if it were or were not a monstrous joy that held her. A clear and exalted perception enabled her to dismiss the suggestion as trivial.

She knew that she would weep again when she saw the kind, tender hands folded in death; the face that had never looked save with love upon her, fixed and gray and dead. But she saw beyond that bitter moment a long procession of years to come that would belong to her absolutely. And she opened and spread her arms out to them in welcome.

There would be no one to live for her during those coming years; she would live for herself. There would be no powerful will bending her in that blind persistence with which men and women believe they have a right to impose a private will upon a fellow creature. A kind intention or a cruel intention made the act seem no less a crime as she looked upon it in that brief moment of illumination.

And yet she had loved him—sometimes. Often she had not. What did it matter! What could love, the unsolved mystery, count for in face of this possession of self-assertion which she suddenly recognized as the strongest impulse of her being!

"Free! Body and soul free!" she kept whispering.

Josephine was kneeling before the closed door with her lips to the keyhole, imploring for admission. "Louise, open the door! I beg; open the door—you will make yourself ill. What are you doing, Louise? For heaven's sake open the door."

"Go away. I am not making myself ill." No; she was drinking in a very elixir of life through that open window.

Her fancy was running riot along those days ahead of her. Spring days, and summer days, and all sorts of days that would be her own. She breathed a quick prayer that life might be long. It was only yesterday she had thought with a shudder that life might be long.

She arose at length and opened the door to her sister's importunities. There was a feverish triumph in her eyes and she carried herself unwittingly like a goddess of Victory. She clasped her sister's waist, and together they descended the stairs. Richards stood waiting for them at the bottom.

Some one was opening the front door with a latchkey. It was Brently Mallard who entered, a little travel-stained, composedly carrying his grip-sack and umbrella. He had been far from the scene of accident, and did not even know there had been one. He stood amazed at Josephine's piercing cry; at Richards' quick motion to screen him from the view of his wife.

But Richards was too late.

When the doctors came they said she had died of heart disease—of joy that kills.

LILACS[1]

MME ADRIENNE FARIVAL never announced her coming; but the good nuns knew very well when to look for her. When the scent of the lilac blossoms began to permeate the air, Sister Agathe would turn many times during the day to the window; upon her face the happy, beatific expression with which pure and simple souls watch for the coming of those they love.

But it was not Sister Agathe; it was Sister Marceline who first espied her crossing the beautiful lawn that sloped up to the convent. Her arms were filled with great bunches of lilacs which she had gathered along her path. She was clad all in brown; like one of the birds that come with the spring, the nuns used to say. Her figure was rounded and graceful, and she walked with a happy buoyant step. The cabriolet which had conveyed her to the convent moved slowly up the gravel drive that led to the imposing entrance. Beside the driver was her modest black trunk, with her name and address printed in white letters upon it: "Mme A Farival, Paris." It was the crunching of the gravel which had attracted Sister Marceline's attention. And then the commotion began.

White-capped heads appeared suddenly at the windows; she waved her parasol and her bunch of lilacs at them. Sister Marceline and Sister Marie Anne appeared, fluttered and expectant at the doorway. But Sister Agathe, more daring and impulsive than all, descended the steps and flew across the grass to meet her. What embraces, in which the lilacs were crushed between them! What ardent kisses! What pink flushes of happiness mounting the cheeks of the two women!

Once within the convent Adrienne's soft brown eyes moistened with tenderness as they dwelt caressingly upon the familiar objects about her, and noted the most trifling details. The white, bare boards of the floor had lost nothing of their luster. The stiff, wooden chairs, standing in rows against the walls of hall and parlor, seemed to have taken on an extra polish since she had seen them, last lilac time. And there was a new picture of the Sacré Coeur hanging over the hall table. What had they done with Ste. Catherine de Sienne, who had occupied that position of honor for so many years? In the chapel—it was no use trying to deceive her—she saw at a glance that St. Joseph's mantle had been embellished with a new coat of blue, and the aureole about his head freshly gilded. And the Blessed Virgin there neglected! Still wearing her garb of last spring, which looked almost dingy by contrast. It was not just—such partiality! The Holy Mother had reason to be jealous and to complain.

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[1] Written May 1894; published in *Times-Democrat,* December 20, 1896.

But Adrienne did not delay to pay her respects to the Mother Superior, whose dignity would not permit her to so much as step outside the door of her private apartments to welcome this old pupil. Indeed, she was dignity in person; large, uncompromising, unbending. She kissed Adrienne without warmth, and discussed conventional themes learnedly and prosaically during the quarter of an hour which the young woman remained in her company.

It was then that Adrienne's latest gift was brought in for inspection. For Adrienne always brought a handsome present for the chapel in her little black trunk. Last year is was a necklace of gems for the Blessed Virgin, which the Good Mother was only permitted to wear on extra occasions, such as great feast days of obligation. The year before it had been a precious crucifix—an ivory figure of Christ suspended from an ebony cross, whose extremities were tipped with wrought silver. This time it was a linen embroidered altar cloth of such rare and delicate workmanship that the Mother Superior, who knew the value of such things, chided Adrienne for the extravagance.

" But, dear Mother, you know it is the greatest pleasure I have in life—to be with you all once a year, and to bring some such trifling token of my regard."

The Mother Superior dismissed her with the rejoinder: "Make yourself at home, my child. Sister Thérèse will see to your wants. You will occupy Sister Marceline's bed in the end room, over the chapel. You will share the room with Sister Agathe."

There was always one of the nuns detailed to keep Adrienne company during her fortnight's stay at the convent. This had become almost a fixed regulation. It was only during the hours of recreation that she found herself with them all together. Those were hours of much harmless merrymaking under the trees or in the nuns' refectory.

This time it was Sister Agathe who waited for her outside of the Mother Superior's door. She was taller and slenderer than Adrienne, and perhaps ten years older. Her fair blonde face flushed and paled with every passing emotion that visited her soul. The two women linked arms and went together out into the open air.

There was so much which Sister Agathe felt that Adrienne must see. To begin with, the enlarged poultry yard, with its dozens upon dozens of new inmates. It took now all the time of one of the lay sisters to attend to them. There had been no change made in the vegetable garden, but—yes there had; Adrienne's quick eye at once detected it. Last year old Phillippe had planted his cabbages in a large square to the right. This year they were set out in an oblong bed to the left. How it made Sister Agathe laugh to think Adrienne should have noticed such a trifle! And old Phillippe, who was nailing a broken trellis not far off, was called forward to be told about it.

He never failed to tell Adrienne how well she looked, and how she was growing younger each year. And it was his delight to recall certain of her youthful and mischievous escapades. Never would he forget that day she disappeared; and the whole convent in a hubbub about it! And how at last it was he who discovered her perched among the tallest branches of the highest tree on the grounds, where she had climbed to see if she could get a glimpse of Paris! And her punishment afterwards!—half of the Gospel of Palm Sunday to learn by heart!

"We may laugh over it, my good Phillippe, but we must remember that Madame is older and wiser now."

"I know well, Sister Agathe, that one ceases to commit follies after the first days of youth." And Adrienne seemed greatly impressed by the wisdom of Sister Agathe and old Phillippe, the convent gardener.

A little later when they sat upon a rustic bench which overlooked the smiling landscape about them, Adrienne was saying to Sister Agathe, who held her hand and stroked it fondly:

"Do you remember my first visit, four years ago, Sister Agathe? and what a surprise it was to you all!"

"As if I could forget it, dear child!"

"And I! Always shall I remember that morning as I walked along the boulevard with a heaviness of heart—oh, a heaviness which I hate to recall. Suddenlyy there was wafted to me the sweet odor of lilac blossoms. A young girl had passed me by, carrying a great bunch of them. Did you ever know, Sister Agathe, that there is nothing which so keenly revives a memory as a perfume—an odor?"

"I believe you are right, Adrienne. For now that you speak of it, I can feel how the odor of fresh bread—when Sister Jeanne bakes—always makes me think of the great kitchen of ma tante de Sierge, and crippled Julie, who always sat knitting at the sunny window. And I never smell the sweet-scented honeysuckle without living again through the blessed day of my first communion."

"Well, that is how it was with me, Sister Agathe, when the scent of the lilacs at once changed the whole current of my thoughts and my despondency. The boulevard, its noises, its passing throng, vanished from before my senses as completely as if they had been spirited away. I was standing here with my feet sunk in the greensward as they are now. I could see the sunlight glancing from that old white stone wall, could hear the notes of birds, just as we hear them now, and the humming of insects in the air. And through all I could see and could smell the lilac blossoms, nodding invitingly to me from their thick-leaved branches. It seems to me they are richer than ever this year, Sister Agathe. And do you know, I became like an *enrageé;* nothing could have kept me back. I do not remember now where I was going; but I turned and retraced my steps homeward in a perfect fever of agitation: 'Sophie! my little trunk—quick—the black one! A mere handful of clothes! I am going away. Don't ask me any questions. I shall be back in a fortnight.' And every year since then it is the same. At the very first whiff of a lilac blossom, I am gone! There is no holding me back."

"And how I wait for you, and watch those lilac bushes, Adrienne! If you should once fail to come, it would be like the spring coming without the sunshine or the song of birds.

"But do you know, dear child, I have sometimes feared that in moments of despondency such as you have just described, I fear that you do not turn as you might to our Blessed Mother in heaven, who is ever ready to comfort and solace an afflicted heart with the precious balm of her sympathy and love."

"Perhaps I do not, dear Sister Agathe. But you cannot picture the annoyances which I am constantly submitted to. That Sophie alone, with her detestable ways! I assure you she of herself is enough to drive me to St. Lazare."

"Indeed, I do understand that the trials of one living in the world must be very great, Adrienne; particularly for you, my poor child, who have to bear them alone, since Almighty God was pleased to call to himself your dear husband. But on the other hand, to live one's life along the lines which our dear Lord traces for each one of us, must bring with it resignation and even a certain comfort. You have your household duties, Adrienne, and your music, to which, you say, you continue to devote yourself. And then, there are always good works—the poor—who are always with us—to be relieved; the afflicted to be comforted."

"But, Sister Agathe! Will you listen! Is it not La Rose that I hear moving down there at the edge of the pasture? I fancy she is reproaching me with being an ingrate, not to have pressed a kiss yet on that white forehead of hers. Come, let us go."

The two women arose and walked again, hand in hand this time, over the tufted grass down the gentle decline where it sloped toward the broad, flat meadow, and the limpid stream that flowed cool and fresh from the woods. Sister Agathe walked with her composed, nunlike tread; Adrienne with a balancing motion, a bounding step, as though the earth responded to her light footfall with some subtle impulse of its own.

They lingered long upon the foot-bridge that spanned the narrow stream which divided the convent grounds from the meadow beyond. It was to Adrienne indescribably sweet to rest there in soft, low converse with this gentle-faced nun, watching the approach of evening. The gurgle of running water beneath them; the lowing of cattle approaching in the distance, were the only sounds that broke upon the stillness, until the clear tones of the angelus bell pealed out from the convent tower. At the sound both women instinctively sank to their knees, signing themselves with the sign of the cross. And Sister Agathe repeated the customary invocation, Adrienne responding in musical tones:

The Angel of the Lord declared unto Mary,
And she conceived by the Holy Ghost—

and so forth, to the end of the brief prayer, after which they arose and retraced their steps toward the convent.

It was with subtle and naïve pleasure that Adrienne prepared herself that night for bed. The room which she shared with Sister Agathe was immaculately white. The walls were a dead white, relieved only by one florid print depicting Jacob's dream at the foot of the ladder, upon which angels mounted and descended. The bare floors, a soft yellow-white, with two little patches of gray carpet beside each spotless bed. At the head of the white-draped beds were two *bénitiers* containing holy water absorbed in sponges.

Sister Agathe disrobed noiselessly behind her curtains and glided into bed without having revealed, in the faint candle-light, as much as a shadow of herself. Adrienne pattered about the room, shook and folded her garments with great care, placing them on the back of a chair as she had been taught to do when a child at the convent. It secretly pleased Sister Agathe to feel that her dear Adrienne clung to the habits acquired in her youth.

But Adrienne could not sleep. She did not greatly desire to do so. These hours seemed too precious to be cast into the oblivion of slumber.

" Are you not asleep, Adrienne? "

" No, Sister Agathe. You know it is always so the first night. The excitement of my arrival—I don't know what—keeps me awake."

" Say your ' Hail, Mary,' dear child, over and over."

" I have done so, Sister Agathe; it does not help."

" Then lie quite still on your side and think of nothing but your own respiration. I have heard that such inducement to sleep seldom fails."

" I will try. Good night, Sister Agathe."

" Good night, dear child. May the Holy Virgin guard you."

An hour later Adrienne was still lying with wide, wakeful eyes, listening to the regular breathing of Sister Agathe. The trailing of the passing wind through the treetops, the ceaseless babble of the rivulet were some of the sounds that came to her faintly through the night.

The days of the fortnight which followed were in character much like the first peaceful, uneventful day of her arrival, with the exception only that she devoutly heard mass every morning at an early hour in the convent chapel, and on Sundays sang in the choir in her agreeable, cultivated voice, which was heard with delight and the warmest appreciation.

When the day of her departure came, Sister Agathe was not satisfied to say good-by at the portal as the others did. She walked down the drive beside the creeping old cabriolet, chattering her pleasant last words. And then she stood—it was as far as she might go—at the edge of the road, waving good-bye in response to the fluttering of Adrienne's handkerchief. Four hours later Sister Agathe, who was instructing a class of little girls their first communion, looked up at the class-room clock and murmured: " Adrienne is at home now."

Yes, Adrienne was at home. Paris had engulfed her.

At the very hour when Sister Agathe looked up at the clock, Adrienne, clad in a charming negligé, was reclining indolently in the depths of a luxurious armchair. The bright room was in its accustomed state of picturesque disorder. Musical scores were scattered upon the open piano. Thrown carelessly over the backs of chairs were puzzling and astonishing-looking garments.

In a large gilded cage near the window perched a clumsy green parrot. He blinked stupidly at a young girl in street dress who was exerting herself to make him talk.

In the center of the room stood Sophie, that thorn in her mistress's side. With hands plunged in the deep pockets of her apron, her white starched cap quivering with each emphatic motion of her grizzled head, she was holding forth, to the evident ennui of the two young women. She was saying:

" Heaven knows I have stood enough in the six years I have been with Mademoiselle; but never such indignation as I have had to endure in the past two weeks at the hands of that man who calls himself a manager! The very first day—and I, good enough to notify him at once of Mademoiselle's flight—he arrives like a lion; I tell you, like a lion. He insists upon knowing Mademoiselle's whereabouts. How can I tell him any more than the statute out there in the square? He calls me a liar! Me, me—a liar! He declares he is ruined. The public will not stand La Petite Gilberta in the role which Mademoiselle has made so famous—La Petite Gilberta, who dances like a jointed wooden figure and sings like a *traînée* of a *café chantant.* If I were to tell La Gilberta that, as I easily might, I guarantee it would not be well for the few straggling hairs which he has left on that miserable head of his!

" What could he do? He was obliged to inform the public that Mademoiselle was ill; and then began my real torment! Answering this one and that one with their cards, their flowers, their dainties in covered dishes! which I must admit saved Florine and me much cooking. And all the while having to tell them that the physician had advised for Mademoiselle a rest of two weeks at some watering-place, the name of which I had forgotten! "

Adrienne had been contemplating old Sophie with quizzical, half-closed eyes, and pelting her with hot-house roses which lay in her lap, and which she nipped off short from their graceful stems for that purpose. Each rose struck Sophie full in the face; but they did not disconcert her or once stem the torrent of her talk.

" Oh, Adrienne! " entreated the young girl at the parrot's cage. " Make her hush; please do something. How can you ever expect Zozo to talk? A dozen times he has been on the point of saying something! I tell you, she stupefies him with her chatter."

" My good Sophie," remarked Adrienne, not changing her attitude, " you see the roses are all used up. But I assure you anything at hand goes," carelessly picking up a book from the table beside her. " What is this? Mons. Zola! Now I warn you, Sophie, the weightiness, the heaviness of Mons. Zola are such that they cannot fail to prostrate you; thankful you may be if they leave you with energy to regain your feet."

" Mademoiselle's pleasantries are all very well; but if I am to be shown the door for it—if I am to be crippled for it—I shall say that I think Mademoiselle is a woman without conscience and without a heart. To torture a man as she does! A man? No, an angel!

" Each day he has come with sad visage and drooping mien. ' No news, Sophie? '

" ' None, Monsieur Henri.' ' Have you no idea where she has gone? ' ' Not any more than the statute in the square, Monsieur.' ' Is it perhaps possible that she may not return at all? ' with his face blanching like that curtain.

" I assure him you will be back at the end of the fortnight. I entreat him to have patience. He drags himself, *désolé,* about the room, picking up Mademoiselle's fan, her gloves, her music, and turning them over and over in his hands. Mademoiselle's slipper, which she took off to throw at me in the impatience of her departure, and which I purposely left lying where it fell on the chiffonier—he kissed it—I saw him do it—and thrust it into his pocket, thinking himself unobserved.

" The same song each day. I beg him to eat a little good soup which I have prepared. ' I cannot eat, my good Sophie.' The other night he came and stood long gazing out of the window at the stars. When he turned he was wiping his eyes; they were red. He said he had been riding in the dust, which had inflamed them. But I knew better; he had been crying.

" Ma foi! in his place I would snap my finger at such cruelty. I would go out and amuse myself. What is the use of being young."

Adrienne arose with a laugh. She went and seizing old Sophie by the shoulders shook her till the white cap wobbled on her head.

" What is the use of all this litany, my good Sophie? Year after year the same! Have you forgotten that I have come a long, dusty journey by rail, and that I am perishing of hunger and thirst? Bring us a bottle of Château Yquem and a biscuit and my box of cigarettes." Sophie had freed herself, and was retreating toward the door. " And, Sophie, if Monsieur Henri is still waiting, tell him to come up."

It was precisely a year later. The spring had come again, and Paris was intoxicated.

Old Sophie sat in her kitchen discoursing to a neighbor who had come in to borrow some trifling kitchen utensil from the old *bonne.*

" You know, Rosalie, I begin to believe it is an attack of lunacy which seizes her once a year. I wouldn't say it to everyone, but with you I know it will go no further. She ought to be treated for it; a physician should be consulted; it is not well to neglect such things and let them run on.

"It came this morning like a thunder clap. As I am sitting here, there had been no thought or mention of a journey. The baker had come into the kitchen—you know what a gallant he is—with always a girl in his eye. He laid the bread down upon the table and beside it a bunch of lilacs. I didn't know they had bloomed yet. 'For Mam'selle Florine, with my regards,' he said with his foolish simper.

"Now, you know I was not going to call Florine from her work in order to present her the baker's flowers. All the same, it would not do to let them wither. I went with them in my hand into the dining room to get a majolica pitcher which I had put away in the closet there, on an upper shelf, because the handle was broken. Mademoiselle, who rises early, had just come from her bath, and was crossing the hall that opens into the dining room. Just as she was, in her white *peignoir,* she thrust her head into the dining room, snuffling the air and exclaiming, 'What do I smell?'

"She espied the flowers in my hand and pounced on them like a cat upon a mouse. She held them up to her, burying her face in them for the longest time, only uttering a long 'Ah!'

"Sophie, I am going away. Get out the little black trunk; a few of the plainest garments I have; my brown dress that I have not yet worn."

"'But, Mademoiselle,' I protested, 'you forget that you have ordered a breakfast of a hundred francs for tomorrow.'

"'Shut up!' she cried, stamping her foot.

"'You forget how the manager will rave,' I persisted, 'and vilify me. And you will go like that without a word of adieu to Monsieur Paul, who is an angel if ever one trod the earth.'

"I tell you, Rosalie, her eyes flamed.

"'Do as I tell you this instant," she exclaimed, 'or I will strangle you—with your Monsieur Paul and your manager and your hundred francs!'"

"Yes," affirmed Rosalie, "it is insanity. I had a cousin seized in the same way one morning, when she smelled calf's liver frying with onions. Before night it took two men to hold her."

"I could well see it was insanity, my dear Rosalie, and I uttered not another word as I feared for my life. I simply obeyed her every command in silence. And now—whiff, she is gone! God knows where. But between us, Rosalie—I wouldn't say it to Florine—but I believe it is for no good. I, in Monsieur Paul's place, should have her watched. I would put a detective upon her track.

"Now I am going to close up; barricade the entire establishment. Monsieur Paul, the manager, visitors, all—all may ring and knock and shout themselves hoarse, I am tired of it all. To be vilified and called a liar—at my age, Rosalie!"

Adrienne left her trunk at the small railway station, as the old cabriolet was not at the moment available; and she gladly walked the mile or two of pleasant roadway which led to the convent. How infinitely calm, peaceful, penetrating was the charm of the verdant, undulating country spreading out on all sides of her! She walked along the clear smooth road, twirling her parasol; humming a gay tune; nipping here and there a bud or a waxlike leaf from the hedges along the way; and all the while drinking deep draughts of complacency and content.

She stopped, as she had always done, to pluck lilacs in her path.

As she approached the convent she fancied that a white-capped face had glanced fleetingly from a window; but she must have been mistaken. Evidently she had not been seen, and this time would take them by surprise. She smiled to think how Sister Agathe would utter a little joyous cry of amazement, and in fancy she already felt the warmth and tenderness of the nun's embrace. And how Sister Marceline and the others would laugh, and make game of her puffed sleeves! For puffed sleeves had come into fashion since last year; and the vagaries of fashion always afforded infinite merriment to the nuns. No, they surely had not seen her.

She ascended lightly the stone steps and rang the bell. She could hear the sharp metallic sound reverberate through the halls. Before its last note had died away the door was opened very slightly, very cautiously by a lay sister who stood there with downcast eyes and flaming cheeks. Through the narrow opening she thrust forward toward Adrienne a package and a letter, saying, in confused tones: "By order of our Mother Superior." After which she closed the door hastily and turned the heavy key in the great lock.

Adrienne remained stunned. She could not gather her faculties to grasp the meaning of this singular reception. The lilacs fell from her arms to the stone portico on which she was standing. She turned the note and the parcel stupidly over in her hands, instinctively dreading what their contents might disclose.

The outlines of the crucifix were plainly to be felt through the wrapper of the bundle, and she guessed, without having courage to assure herself, that the jeweled necklace and the altar cloth accompanied it.

Leaning against the heavy oaken door for support, Adrienne opened the letter. She did not seem to read the few bitter reproachful lines word by word—the lines that banished her forever from this haven of peace, where her soul was wont to come and refresh itself. They imprinted themselves as a whole upon her brain, in all their seeming cruelty—she did not dare to say injustice.

There was no anger in her heart; that would doubtless possess her later, when her nimble intelligence would begin to seek out the origin of this treacherous turn. Now, there was only room for tears. She leaned her forehead against the heavy oaken panel of the door and wept with the abandonment of a little child.

She descended the steps with a nerveless and dragging tread. Once as she was walking away, she turned to look back at the imposing façade of the convent, even, giving a faint token that she was still cherished by some one faithful heart. But she saw only the polished windows looking down at her like so many cold and glittering and reproachful eyes.

In the little white room above the chapel, a woman knelt beside the bed on which Adrienne had slept. Her face was pressed deep in the pillow in her efforts to smother the sobs that convulsed her frame. It was Sister Agathe.

After a short while, a lay sister came out of the door with a broom, and swept away the lilac blossoms which Adrienne had let fall upon the portico.

TWO PORTRAITS[1]

I

THE WANTON

ALBERTA having looked not very long into life, had not looked very far. She put out her hands to touch things that pleased her and her lips to kiss them. Her eyes were deep brown wells that were drinking, drinking impressions and treasuring them in her soul. They were mysterious eyes and love looked out of them.

Alberta was very fond of her mama who was really not her mama; and the beatings which alternated with the most amiable and generous indulgence, were soon forgotten by the little one, always hoping that there would never be another, as she dried her eyes.

She liked the ladies who petted her and praised her beauty, and the artists who painted it naked, and the student who held her upon his knee and fondled and kissed her while he taught her to read and spell.

There was a cruel beating about that one day, when her mama happened to be in the mood to think her too old for fondling. And the student had called her mama some very vile names in his wrath, and had asked the woman what else she expected.

There was nothing very fixed or stable about her expectations—whatever they were—as she had forgotten them the following day, and Alberta, consoled with a fantastic bracelet for her plump little arm and a shower of bonbons, installed herself again upon the student's knee. She liked nothing better, and in time was willing to take the beating if she might hold his attentions and her place in his affections and upon his knee.

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[1] Written August 1895; published here from MS.

Alberta cried very bitterly when he went away. The people about her seemed to be always coming and going. She had hardly the time to fixe her affections upon the men and women who came into her life before they were gone again.

Her mama died one day—very suddenly; a self-inflicted death, she heard the people say. Alberta grieved sorely, for she forgot the beatings and remembered only the outbursts of a torrid affection. But she really did not belong anywhere then, nor to anybody. And when a lady and gentleman took her to live with them, she went willingly as she would have gone anywhere, with anyone. With them she met with more kindness and indulgence than she had ever known before in her life.

There were no more beatings; Alberta's body was too beautiful to be beaten; it was made for love. She knew that herself; she had heard it since she had heard anything. But now she heard many things and learned many more. She did not lack for instruction in the wiles—the ways of stirring a man's desire and holding it. Yet she did not need instruction—the secret was in her blood and looked out of her passionate, wanton eyes and showed in every motion of her seductive body.

At seventeen she was woman enough, so she had a lover. But as for that, there did not seem to be much difference. Except that she had gold now—plenty of it with which to make herself appear more beautiful, and enough to fling with both hands into the laps of those who came whining and begging to her.

Alberta is a most beautiful woman, and she takes great care of her body, for she knows that it brings her love to squander and gold to squander.

Someone has whispered in her ear:

"Be cautious, Alberta. Save, save your gold. The years are passing. The days are coming when youth slips away, when you will stretch out your hands for money and for love in vain. And what will be left for you but—"

Alberta shrank in horror before the pictured depths of hideous degradation that would be left for her. But she consoles herself with the thought that such need never be—with death and oblivion always within her reach.

Alberta is capricious. She gives her love only when and where she chooses. One or two men have died because of her withholding it. There is a smooth-faced boy now who teases her with his resistance; for Alberta does not know shame or reserve.

One day he seems to half-relent and another time he plays indifference, and she frets and she fumes and rages.

But he had best have a care; for since Alberta has added much wine to her wantonness she is apt to be vixenish; and she carries a knife.

II

THE NUN

Alberta having looked not very long into life, had not looked very far. She put out her hands to touch things that pleased her, and her lips to kiss them. Her eyes were deep brown wells that were drinking, drinking impressions and treasuring them in her soul. They were mysterious eyes and love looked out of them.

It was a very holy woman who first took Alberta by the hand. The thought of God alone dwelt in her mind, and His name and none other was on her lips.

When she showed Alberta the creeping insects, the blades of grass, the flowers and trees; the rain-drops falling from the clouds; the sky and the stars and the men and women moving on the earth, she taught her that it was God who had created all; that God was great, was good, was the Supreme Love.

And when Alberta would have put out her hands and her lips to touch the great and all-loving God, it was then the holy woman taught her that it is not with the hands and lips and eyes that we reach God, but with the soul; that the soul must be made perfect and the flesh subdued. And what is the soul but the inward thought? And this the child was taught to keep spotless—pure, and fit as far as a human soul can be, to hold intercourse with the all wise and all-seeing God.

Her existence became a prayer. Evil things approached her not. The inherited sin of the blood must have been washed away at the baptismal font; for all the things of this world that she encountered—the pleasures, the trials and even temptations—but turned her gaze within, through her soul up to the fountain of all love and every beatitude.

When Alberta had reached the age when with other women the languor of love creeps into the veins and dreams begin, at such a period an overpowering impulse toward the purely spiritual possessed itself of her. She could no longer abide the sights, the sounds, the accidental happenings of life surrounding her, that tended but to disturb her contemplation of the heavenly existence.

It was then she went into the convent—the white convent on the hill that overlooks the river; the big convent whose long, dim corridors echo with the soft tread of a multitude of holy women; whose atmosphere of chastity, poverty, and obedience penetrates to the soul through benumbed senses.

But of all the holy women in the white convent, there is none so saintly as Alberta. Anyone will tell you that who knows them. Even her pious guide and counsellor does not equal her in sanctity. Because Alberta is endowed with the powerful gift of a great love that lifts her above common mortals, close to the invisible throne. Her ears seem to hear sounds that reach no other ears; and what her eyes see, only God and herself know. When the others are plunged in meditation, Alberta is steeped in an oblivious ecstasy. She kneels before the Blessed Sacrament with stiffened, tireless limbs; with absorbing eyes that drink in the holy mystery till it is a mystery no longer, but a real flood of celestial love deluging her soul. She does not hear the sound of bells nor the soft stir of disbanding numbers. She must be touched upon the shoulder; roused, awakened.

Alberta does not know that she is beautiful. If you were to tell her so she would not blush and utter gentle protest and reproof as might the others. She would only smile, as though beauty were a thing that concerned her not. But she is beautiful, with the glow of a holy passion in her dark eyes. Her face is thin and white, but illumined from within by a light which seems not of this world.

She does not walk upright; she could not, overpowered by the Divine Presence and the realization of her own nothingness. Her hands, slender and blue-veined, and her delicate fingers seem to have been fashioned by God to be clasped and uplifted in prayer.

It is said—not broadcast, it is only whispered—that Alberta sees visions. Oh, the beautiful visions! The first of them came to her when she was wrapped in suffering, in quivering contemplation of the bleeding and agonizing Christ. Oh, the dear God! who loved her beyond the power of man to describe, to conceive. The God-Man, the Man-God, suffering, bleeding, dying for her, Alberta, a worm upon the earth; dying that she might be saved from sin and transplanted among the heavenly delights. Oh, if she might die for Him in return! But she could only abandon herself to His mercy and His love. "Into Thy hands, O Lord! Into Thy hands!"

She pressed her lips upon the bleeding wounds and the Divine Blood disfigured her. The Virgin Mary enfolded her in her mantle. She could not describe in words the ecstasy; that taste of the Divine love which only the souls of the transplanted could endure in its awful and complete intensity. She, Alberta, had received this sign of Divine favor; this foretaste of heavenly bliss. For an hour she had swooned in rapture; she had lived in Christ. Oh, the beautiful visions!

The visions come often to Alberta now, refreshing and strengthening her soul; it is being talked about a little in whispers.

And it is said that certain afflicted persons have been helped by her prayers. And others having abounding faith, have been cured of bodily ailments by the touch of her beautiful hands.

VAGABONDS[1]

VALCOUR was waiting. A negro who had come to the store for rations told me that he was down below around the bend and wanted to see me. It never would have entered my mind to put myself the least bit out of the way for the sake of a rendezvous with Valcour; he might have waited till the crack of doom. But it was the hour for my afternoon walk and I did not mind stopping on the way, to see what the vagabond wanted with me.

The weather was a little warm for April, and of course it had been raining. But with the shabby skirt which I wore and the clumsy old boots, the wet and the mud distressed me not at all; beside, I walked along the grassy edge of the road. The river was low and sluggish between its steep embankments that were like slimy pitfalls. Valcour was sitting on the fallen trunk of a tree near the water, waiting.

I saw at a glance that he was sober; though his whole appearance gave evidence of his having been drunk at no very remote period. His clothes, his battered hat, his skin, his straggling beard which he never shaved, were all of one color—the color of clay. He made but the faintest offer to rise at my approach; and I saved him the complete effort by seating myself at once beside him on the log. I was glad that he showed no disposition to shake hands, for his hands were far from clean; and moreover he might have discovered the dollar bill which I had slipped into my glove in case of emergencies. He greeted me with his usual:

" How you come on, cousin? "

There exists a tradition outside the family that Valcour is a relation of ours. I am the only one, somehow, who does not strenuously deny the charge.

" Me, I'm well enough, Valcour."

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[1] Written December 1895; published here from MS.

I long ago discovered that there is no need of wasting fine language on Valcour. Such effort could only evince a pride and affectation from which I am happily free.

" W'at you mean," I continued, " by sending me word you want to see me. You don' think fo' an instant I'd come down here o' purpose to see an object like you."

Valcour laughed. He is the only soul who discovers any intention of humor in my utterances. He refuses to take me seriously. " An' w'at you doing with yo'self these days? " I asked.

" Oh, me, I been jobbin' roun' some, up the coas'. But I yeard 'bout a chance down in Alexandria if I c'n make out to git down there."

" Of course not a picayune in sight," I grumbled. " An' I tell you, I aint much better off myself. Look at those shoes "—holding my feet out for his inspection—" an' this dress; an' take a look at those cabins an' fences, ready to fall to pieces."

" I ant no mine to ask you fo' money, cousin," he cheerfully assured me.

" All the same, I bet you a' plumb broke," I insisted. With some little difficulty—for his grasp was unsteady—he drew from his trousers pocket a few small coins which he held out before me. I was glad to see them and thrust the dollar bill further into my glove.

" Just about the price of a quart, Valcour," I calculated. " I reckon it's no use warning a *vaurien* like you agains' wiskey; its boun' to be the end of you some o' these days."

" It make' a man crazy, that w'iskey," he admitted. " Wouldn' been fo' that w'iskey, I neva would got in that peck o' trouble yonda on Bayou Derbonne. Me, I don' rec'lec a thing till I fine myse'f layin' on doctor Jureau's gall'ry."

" That *was* a nice mess," I told him, " getting yo'self filled plumb full of buckshot fo' trying to kiss another man's wife. You must a' been pretty drunk anyway, to want to kiss Joe Poussin's wife."

Valcour, again mistaking cynicism for humor, almost rolled off the log in his hilarious appreciation of the insinuation.

His laugh was contagious and I could not help joining him. "*Hein,* Valcour?" I persisted, "a man mus' be pretty drunk, or mighty hard pushed, *va!*"

"You right," he returned between attacks of mirth, "a man got to be hard push', sho', that want' to kiss Joe Poussin's wife; 'less he been blin' drunk like me."

At the end of a half hour (how could I have stood the vagabond so long!) I reminded Valcour that the way to Alexandria lay across the river; and I expressed a hope that the walking was fair.

I had asked him how he fared, what he ate and where, and how he slept. There was his gun beside him—for a wonder he had never sold it for drink—and were the woods not filled with feathered and antlered game? And sometimes there was a chicken roosting low, and always there was a black wench ready to cook it. As for sleeping—in the winter time, better not have asked him. Grand Dieu! that was hard. But with the summer coming on, why, a man could sleep anywhere that the mosquitoes would let him.

I called him names; but all the same I could not help thinking that it must be good to prowl sometimes; to get close to the black night and lose oneself in its silence and mystery.

He waited for the flat that had been crossing and recrossing a little distance away, and when it touched the bank he said good-bye—as he had greeted me—stolidly and indifferently. He went slipping and slumping down the slimy embankment, ankle deep in mud.

I stayed for pure idleness watching the flat cross the river. Valcour make no offer to help the ferryman with an oar; but rested his arms indolently on the rail of the boat and stared into the muddy stream.

I turned to continue my walk. I was glad the vagabond did not want money. But for the life of me I don't know what he wanted, or why he wanted to see me.

THE RECOVERY[1]

SHE WAS a woman of thirty-five, possessing something of youthfulness. It was not the bloom, the softness, nor delicacy of coloring which had once been hers; those were all gone. It lurked rather in the expression of her sensitive face, which was at once appealing, pathetic, confiding.

For fifteen years she had lived in darkness with closed lids. By one of those seeming miracles of science, and by slow and gradual stages, the light had been restored to her. Now for the first time in many years, she opened her eyes upon the full, mellow brightness of a June day.

She was alone. She had asked to be alone at the very first. Glad almost to ecstasy, she was yet afraid. She wanted first to see the light from her open window; to look at the dumb inanimate objects around her before gazing into the dear familiar faces that were stamped with sharp and vivid impress upon her mind.

And how beautiful was the world from her open window!

"Oh, my God!" she whispered, overcome. Her prayer could get no further. There were no words to utter her rapture and thanksgiving at beholding the blue unfathomable June sky; the rolling meadows, russet and green, reaching deep into the purple distance. Close beside her window the maple leaves rippled in the sun; flowers, rich and warm in color, blossom beneath, and radiant-winged butterflies hovered sensuous in mid-air.

"The world has not changed," she murmured; "it has only grown more beautiful. Oh, I had forgotten how beautiful!"

Within her room were all the dear, dumb companions comforting her. How well she remembered them all! her mahogany table, bright and polished, just as it had stood fifteen years ago, with a crystal vase of roses and a few books ranged upon it. The sight of chairs, beds, pictures gave her keen joy. The carpet and draperies, even—with their designs as much like the old ones as could be—seemed to her the same.

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[1] Written February 1896; published in *Vogue,* May 21, 1896.

She touched with caressing fingers the French clock upon the mantel with its pompous little bronze figure of a last-century gentleman posing in buckles and frills beside the dial. She greeted him as an old friend, and delicately wiped his little bronze face with her soft handkerchief. As a child she had thought him an imposing figure. At a later and over-discriminating age she had patronized him as a poor bit of art. Now, nothing could have induced her to part with the old French clock and its little bronze bonhomme.

The mirror was over there in the corner. She had not forgotten it; oh, no, she had not forgotten, only she grew tremulous at the thought of it standing there. She held back, as a young girl who is going to confession is ashamed and afraid, and invites delay. But she had not forgotten.

"This is folly," she uttered suddenly, passing the handkerchief nervously over her face. With quick resolution she crossed the room and faced her reflected image in the glass.

"Mother!" she cried, involuntarily, turning swiftly; but she was still alone. It had happened like a flash—an unreasoning impulse that knew not control or direction. She at once recovered herself and drew a deep breath. Again she wiped her forehead, that was a little clammy. She clutched the back of a low chair with her shaking hands and looked once more into the mirror. The veins in her wrists swelled like cords and throbbed.

You or I or anyone looking upon that same picture in the glass would have seen a rather well-preserved, stately blonde woman of thirty-five or more. Only God knows what she saw. It was something that held her with terrible fascination.

The eyes, above all, seemed to speak to her. Afflicted as they had been, they alone belonged to that old, other self that had somewhere vanished. She questioned, she challenged them. And while she looked down into their depths she drew into her soul all the crushing weight of the accumulated wisdom of years.

" They lied; they all lied to me," she said, half aloud, never taking her eyes from those others. " Mother, sisters, Robert —all, all of them lied."

When the eyes in the glass had nothing more to tell her, she turned away from them. The pathos of her face had vanished; there was no longer the appeal that had been there a while age; neither was there confidence.

The following day she walked abroad leaning upon the arm of the man whose untiring devotion to her had persisted for years. She would not fulfill her promise to marry him when blindness had overtaken her. He had endured the years of probation, wanting no other woman for his wife; living at her side when he could, and bringing himself close to her inner life by a warm, quick, watchful sympathy born of much love.

He was older than she—a man of splendid physique. The slim stripling of fifteen years ago was hardly the promise of this man of forty. His face had settled into a certain ruggedness accentuated by a few strong lines, and white hairs were beginning to show among the black ones on the temples.

They walked across the level stretch of lawn toward a sheltered garden seat no great distance away. She had spoken little since that moment of revelation before her mirror. Nothing had startled her after that. She was prepared for the changes which the years had wrought in all of them—mother, sisters, friends.

She seemed to be silently absorbing things, and would have lingered in ecstasy before a flower, or with her gaze penetrating the dense foliage beyond. Her senses had long been sharpened to the sounds and odors of the good, green world, and now her restored vision completed a sensuous impression such as she had never dreamed could be borne in upon a human consciousness.

He led her away to the bench. He fancied that seated he could better hold her attention to what was in his mind to say to her.

He took her hand in his. She was used to this and did not draw it away, but let it lie there.

"Do you remember the old plans, Jane?" he began, almost at once, "all that we were to have done, to have seen, all that we were going to live together? How we had chosen to start away in the early spring time upon our travels—you and I—and only come back with the frosts of winter. You have not forgotten, dearest?" He bent his face down over her hand and kissed it. "The spring is over; but we have the summer with us, and God willing, the autumn and winter left to us. Tell me, Jane—tell me—speak to me!" he entreated.

She looked into his face and then away, and back again, uncertainly.

"I—oh, Robert," she said, gropingly, "wait—I—the sight of things confuses me," and with a faint smile, "I am not used; I must go back into the dark to think."

He still held her hand, but she turned half away from him and buried her face in her arm that she leaned upon the back of the garden seat.

What could she hope to gather from the darkness that the light had not given her! She might hope, and she might wait and she might pray; but hope and prayer and waiting would avail her nothing.

The blessed light had given her back the world, life, love; but it had robbed her of her illusions; it had stolen away her youth.

He drew close to her, pressing his face near hers for his answer; and all that he heard was a little low sob.

THE BLIND MAN[1]

A MAN carrying a small red box in one hand walked slowly down the street. His old straw hat and faded garments looked as if the rain had often beaten upon them, and the sun had as many times dried them upon his person. He was not old, but he seemed feeble; and he walked in the sun, along the blistering asphalt pavement. On the opposite side of the street there were trees that threw a thick and pleasant shade; people were all walking on that side. But the man did not know, for he was blind, and moreover he was stupid.

In the red box were lead pencils, which he was endeavoring to sell. He carried no stick, but guided himself by trailing his foot along the stone copings or his hand along the iron railings. When he came to the steps of a house he would mount them. Sometimes, after reaching the door with great difficulty, he could not find the electric button, whereupon he would patiently descend and go his way. Some of the iron gates were locked—their owners being away for the summer—and he would consume much time in striving to open them, which made little difference, as he had all the time there was at his disposal.

At times he succeeded in finding the electric button; but the man or maid who answered the bell needed no pencil, nor could they be induced to disturb the mistress of the house about so small a thing.

The man had been out long and had walked very far, but had sold nothing. That morning someone who had finally grown tired of having him hanging around had equipped him with this box of pencils, and sent him out to make his living. Hunger, with sharp fangs, was gnawing at his stomach and a consuming thirst parched his mouth and tortured him. The sun was broiling. He wore too much clothing—a vest and coat over his shirt. He might have removed these and carried them on his arm or thrown them away; but he did not think of it. A kind-hearted woman who saw him from an upper window felt sorry for him, and wished that he would cross over into the shade.

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[1] Written July 1896; published in *Vogue,* May 13, 1897.

The man drifted into a side street, where there was a group of noisy, excited children at play. The color of the box which he carried attracted them and they wanted to know what was in it. One of them attempted to take it away from him. With the instinct to protect his own and his only means of sustenance, he resisted, shouted at the children and called them names. A policeman coming around the corner and seeing that he was the center of disturbance jerked him violently around by the collar; but upon perceiving that he was blind, considerately refrained from clubbing him and sent him on his way. He walked on in the sun.

During his aimless rambling he turned into a street where there were monster electric cars thundering up and down, clanging wild bells and literally shaking the ground beneath his feet with their terrific impetus. He started to cross the street.

Then something happened—something horrible happened that made the women faint and the strongest men who saw it grow sick and dizzy. The motorman's lips were as gray as his face, and that was ashen gray; and he shook and staggered from the superhuman effort he had put forth to stop his car.

Where could the crowds have come from so suddenly, as if by magic? Boys on the run, men and women tearing up on their wheels to see the sickening sight; doctors dashing up in buggies as if directed by Providence.

And the horror grew when the multitude recognized in the dead and mangled figure one of the wealthiest, most useful and most influential men of the town—a man noted for his prudence and foresight. How could such a terrible fate have overtaken him? He was hastening from his business house—for he was late—to join his family, who were to start in an hour or two for their summer home on the Atlantic coast. In his hurry he did not perceive the other car coming from the opposite direction, and the common, harrowing thing was repeated.

The blind man did not know what the commotion was all about. He had crossed the street, and there he was, stumbling on in the sun, trailing his foot along the coping.

SUZETTE[1]

MA'ME ZIDORE thrust her head in at the window to tell Suzette that Michel Jardeau was dead.

" Ah, bon Dieu! " cried the girl, clasping her hands, " c' pauv' Michel! "

Ma'me Zidore had heard the news from one of Chartrand's " hands " who was passing with his wagon through the cut-off when she was gathering wood. Her old back was at that moment bent beneath the fagots. She spoke loud and noisily in shrill outbursts. With her unsteady, claw-like fingers she kept brushing aside the wisp of wiry gray hair that fell across her withered cheek.

She knew the story from beginning to end. Michel had boarded the Grand Ecore flat that very morning at daybreak. Jules Bat, the ferry man, had found him waiting on the bank to cross when he carried the doctor over to see Racell's sick child. He could not say whether Michel were drunk or not; he was gruff and ill-humored and seemed to be half asleep. Ma'me Zidore thought it highly probable that the young man had been carousing all night and was still under the influence of liquor when he lost his balance and fell into the water. A half dozen times Jules Bat had called out to him, warning him of his danger, for he persisted in standing at the open end of the boat. Then all in one miserable second over he went like a log. The water was high and turbid as a boiling caldron. Jules Bat saw no more of him than if he had been so many pounds of lead dropped into Red River.

A few people had assembled at their gates across the way, having gathered from snatches of the old woman's penetrating tones that something of interest had happened. She left Suzette standing at the window and crossed the road slant-wise, her whole gaunt frame revealing itself through her scanty, worn garments as the soft, swift breeze struck her old body.

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[1] Written February 1897; published in *Vogue* October 21, 1897.

" Michel Jardeau est mort! " she croaked, telling her news so suddenly that the women all cried out in dismay, and little Pavie Ombre, who was just reviving from a spell of sickness, uttered not a sound, but swayed to and fro and sank gently down on her knees in a white, dead faint.

Suzette retired into the room and approaching the tiny mirror that hung above the chest of drawers proceeded to finish her toilet, in which task she had been interrupted by Ma'me Zidore's abrupt announcement of Michel Jardeau's death.

The girl every little while muttered under her breath:

" C' pauv' Michel." Yet her eyes were quite dry; they gleamed, but not with tears. Regret over the loss of " poor Michel " was in nowise distracting her attention from the careful arrangement of a bunch of carnations in the coils of her lustrous brown hair.

Yet she was thinking of him and wondering why she did not care.

A year ago—not so long as that—she had loved him desperately. It began that day at the barbecue when, seized with sudden infatuation, he stayed beside her the whole day long; turning her head with his tones, his glances, and soft touches. Before that day he had seemed to care for little Pavie Ombre who had come out of her faint and was now wailing and sobbing across the way, indifferent to those who might hear her in passing along the road. But after that day he cared no longer for Pavie Ombre or any woman on earth besides Suzette. What a weariness that love had finally become to her, only herself knew.

Why did he persist? why could he not have understood? His attentions had fretted her beyond measure; it was torture to feel him there every Sunday at Mass with his eyes fastened upon her during the entire service. It was not her fault that he had grown desperate—that he was dead.

She turned her head this way and that way before the small glass noting the effect of the carnations in her hair. She gave light touches to the trimmings about her neck and waist, and adjusted the puffed sleeves of her white gown. She moved about the small room with a certain suppressed agitation, returning often to the mirror, and sometimes straying to the window.

Suzette was standing there when a sound arrested her attention—the distant tramp of an advancing herd of cattle. It was what she had been waiting for; what she had been listening for. Yet she trembled through her whole supple frame when she heard it, and the color began to mount into her cheeks. She stayed there at the window looking like a painted picture in its frame.

The house was small and low and stood a little back, with no inclosing fence about the grass plot that reached from the window quite to the edge of the road.

All was still, save for the tramp of the advancing herd. There was no dust, for it had rained during the morning; and Suzette could see them now, approaching with slow, swinging motion and tossing of long horns. Mothers had run out, gathering and snatching their little ones from the road. Baptiste, one of the drivers, shouted hoarsely, cracking his long whip, while a couple of dogs tore madly around snapping and barking.

The other driver, a straight-backed young fellow, sat his horse with familiar ease and carelessness. He wore a white flannel shirt, coarse trousers and leggings and a broad-brimmed gray felt. From the moment his figure appeared in sight, Suzette did not remove her eyes from him. The glow in her cheeks was resplendent now.

She was feeling in anticipation the penetration of his glance, the warmth of his smile when he should see her. He would ride up to the window, no doubt, to say good-bye, and she would give him the carnations as a remembrance to keep till he came back.

But what did he mean? She turned a little chill with apprehension. Why, at that precious moment should he bother about the unruly beast that seemed bent upon making trouble? And there was that idiot, that pig of a Baptiste pulling up on the other side of him—talking to him, holding his attention. Mère de Dieu! how she hated and could have killed the fool!

With a single impulse there was a sudden quickened movement of the herd—a dash forward. Then they went! with lowered, tossing heads, rounding the bend that sloped down to the ford.

He had passed! He had not looked at her! He had not thought of her! He would be gone three weeks—three eternities! and every hour freighted with the one bitter remembrance of his indifference!

Suzette turned from the window—her face gray and pinched, with all the warmth and color gone out of it. She flung herself upon the bed and there she cried and moaned with wrenching sobs between.

The carnations drooped from their fastening and lay like a blood-stain upon her white neck.

A FAMILY AFFAIR[1]

THE MOMENT that the wagon rattled out of the yard away to the station, Madame Solisainte settled herself into a state of nervous expectancy.

She was superabundantly fat; and her body accommodated itself to the huge chair in which she sat, filling up curves and crevices like water poured into a mould. She was clad in an ample muslin *peignoir* sprigged with brown. Her cheeks were flabby, her mouth thin-lipped and decisive. Her eyes were small, watchful, and at the same time timid. Her brown hair, streaked with gray, was arranged in a bygone fashion, a narrow mesh being drawn back from the center of the forehead to conceal a bald spot, and the sides plastered down smooth over her small, close ears.

The room in which she sat was large and uncarpeted. There were handsome and massive pieces of furniture decorating the apartment, and a magnificent brass clock stood on the mantelpiece.

Madame Solisainte sat at a back window which overlooked the yard, the brick kitchen—a little removed from the house—and the field road which led down to the negro quarters. She was unable to leave her chair. It was an affair of importance to get her out of bed in the morning, and an equally arduous task to put her back there at night.

It was a sore affliction to the old woman to be thus incapacitated during her latter years, and rendered unable to watch and control her household affairs. She was sure that she was being robbed continuously and on all sides. This conviction was nourished and kept alive by her confidential servant, Dimple, a very black girl of sixteen, who trod softly about on her bare feet and had thereby made herself unpopular in the kitchen and down at the quarters.

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[1] Written January (?) 1898; published in the *Saturday Evening Post*, September 9, 1899.

The notion had entered Madam Solisainte's head to have one of her nieces come up from New Orleans and stay with her. She thought it would be doing the niece and her family a great kindness, and would furthermore be an incalculable saving to herself in many ways, and far cheaper than hiring a housekeeper.

There were four nieces, not too well off, with whom she was indifferently acquainted. In selecting one of these to make her home on the plantation she exercised no choice, leaving that matter to her sister and the girls, to be settled among them.

It was Bosey who consented to go to her aunt. Her mother spelled her name Bosé. She herself spelled it Bosey. But as often as not she was called plain Bose. It was she who was sent, because, as her mother wrote Madame Solisainte, Bosé was a splendid manager, a most excellent housekeeper, and moreover possessed a temperament of such rare amiability that none could help being cheered and enlivened by her presence.

What she did not write was that none of the other girls would entertain the notion for an instant of making even a temporary abiding place with their Tante Félicie. And Bosey's consent was only wrung from her with the understanding that the undertaking was purely experimental, and that she bound herself by no cast-iron obligations.

Madame Solisainte had sent the wagon to the station for her niece, and was impatiently awaiting its return.

" It's no sign of the wagon yet, Dimple? You don't see it? You don't hear it coming? "

" No'um; 'taint no sign. De train des 'bout lef' de station. I yeard it w'istle." Dimple stood on the back porch beside her mistress' open window. She wore a calico dress so skimp and inadequate that her growing figure was bursting through the rents and apertures. She was constantly pinning it at the back of the waist with a bent safetypin which was forever giving way. The task of pinning her dress and biting the old brass safetypin into shape occupied a great deal of her time.

"It's true," Madame said. "I recommend to Daniel to drive those mule' very slow in this hot weather. They are not strong, those mule'."

"He drive 'em slow 'nough long's he's in the fiel' road!" exclaimed Dimple. "Time he git roun' in de big road whar you kain't see 'im—uh! uh! he make' dem mule' fa'r lope!"

Madame tightened her lips and blinked her eyes. She rarely replied otherwise to these disclosures of Dimple, but they sank into her soul and festered there.

The cook—in reality a big-boned field hand—came in with pans and pails to get out the things for supper. Madame kept her provisions right there under her nose in a large closet, or cupboard, which she had had built in the side of the room. A small supply of butter was in a jar that stood on the hearth, and the eggs were kept in a basket that hung on a peg near by.

Dimple came in and unlocked the cupboard, taking the keys from her mistress' bag. She gave out a little flour, a little meal, a cupful of coffee, some sugar and a piece of bacon. Four eggs were wanted for a pudding, but Madame thought that two would be enough, finally compromising, however, upon three.

Miss Bosey Brantonniere arrived at her aunt's house with three trunks, a large, circular, tin bathtub, a bundle of umbrellas and sunshades, and a small dog. She was a pretty, energetic-looking girl, with her chin in the air, tastefully dressed in the latest fashion, and dispersing an atmosphere of bustle and importance about her. Daniel had driven her up the field road, depositing her at the back entrance, where Madame, from her window, commanded a complete view of her arrival.

"I thought you would have sent the carriage for me, Tante Félicie, but Daniel tells me you have no carriage," said the girl after the first greetings were over. She had had her trunks taken to her room, the tub slipped under the bed, and now she sat fondling the dog and talking to Tante Félicie.

The old lady shook her head dismally and her lips curled into a disparaging smile.

"Oh! no, no! The ol' carriage 'as been sol' ages ago to Zéphire Lablatte. It was falling to piece' in the shed. Me—I never stir f'um w'ere you see me; it is good two year' since I 'ave been inside the church, let alone to go *en promenade.*"

"Well, I'm going to take all care and bother off your shoulders, Tante Félicie," uttered the girl cheerfully. "I'm going to brighten things up for you, and we'll see how quickly you'll improve. Why, in less than two months I'll have you on your feet, going about as spry as anybody."

Madame was far less hopeful. "My ol' mother was the same," she replied with dejected resignation. "Nothing could 'elp her. She lived many year' like you see me; your mamma mus' 'ave often tol' you."

Mrs. Brantonniere had never related to the girls anything disparaging concerning their Aunt Félicie, but other members of the family had been less considerate, and Bosey had often been told of her aunt's avarice and grasping ways. How she had laid her clutch upon her mother's belongings, taking undisputed possession by the force of audacity alone. The girl could not help thinking it must have been while her grandmother sat so helpless in her huge chair that Tante Félicie had made herself mistress of the situation. But she was not one to harbor malice. She felt very sorry for Tante Félicie, so afflicted in her childless old age.

Madame lay long awake that night troubled someway over the advent of this niece from New Orleans, who was not precisely what she expected. She did not like the excess of trunks, the bathtub and the dog, all of which savored of extravagance. Nor did she like the chin in the air, which indicated determination and promised trouble.

Dimple was warned next morning to say nothing to her mistress concerning a surprise which Miss Bosey had in store for her. This surprise was that, instead of being deposited in her accustomed place at the back window, where she could keep an eye upon her people, Madame was installed at the front-room window that looked out toward the live oaks and along a leafy, sleepy road that was seldom used.

"*Jamais! Jamais!* it will never do! *Pas possible!*" cried out the old lady with helpless excitement when she perceived what was about to be done to her.

"You'll do just as I say, Tante Félicie," said Bosey, with sprightly determination. "I'm here to take care of you and make you comfortable, and I'm going to do it. Now, instead of looking out on that hideous back yard, full of dirty little darkies, and pigs and chickens wallowing around, here you have this sweet, peaceful view whenever you look out of the window. Now, here comes Dimple with the magazines and things. Bring them right here, Dimple, and lay them on the table beside Ma'me Félicie. I brought these up from the city expressly for you, Tante, and I have a whole trunkful more when you are through with them."

Dimple was entering, staggering with arms full of books and periodicals of all sizes, shapes, and colors. The strain of carrying the weight of literature had caused the safetypin to give way, and Dimple greatly feared it might have fallen and been lost.

"So, Tante Félicie, you'll have nothing to do but read and enjoy yourself. Here are some French books mamma sent you, something by Daudet, something by Maupassant and a lot more. Here, let me brighten up your spectacles." She brightened the old lady's glasses with a piece of thin tissue paper which fell from one of the books.

"And now, Madame Solisainte, you give me all the keys! Turn them right over, and I'll go out and make myself thoroughly acquainted with everything." Madame spasmodically clutched the bag that swung to the arm of her chair.

"O! a whole bagful!" exclaimed the girl, gently but firmly disengaging it from her aunt's claw-like fingers. "My, what an undertaking I have before me! Dimple had better show me round this morning until I get thoroughly acquainted. You can knock on the floor with your stick when you want her. Come along, Dimple. Fasten your dress." The girl was scanning the floor for the safetypin, which she found out in the hall.

During all of Madame Solisainte's days no one had ever spoken to her with the authority which this young woman assumed. She did not know what to make of it. She felt that she should have revolted at once against being thus banished to the front room. She should have spoken out and maintained possession of her keys when demanded, with the spirit of a highway robber, to give them up. She pounded her stick on the floor with loud and sudden energy. Dimple appeared with inquisitive eyes.

" Dimple," said Madame, " tell Miss Bosé to please 'ave the kin'ness and sen' me back my bag of key'."

Dimple vanished and returned almost on the instant.

" Miss Bosey 'low don't you bodda. Das you go on lookin' at de picters. She ain' gwine let nuttin' happen to de keys."

After an uneasy interval Madame recalled the girl.

" Dimple, if you could look in the bag an' bring me my armoire key—you know it—the brass one. Do not let on as though I would want that key in partic'lar."

" De bag hangin' on her arm. She got de string twis' roun' her wris'," reported Dimple presently. Madame Félicie inwardly fumed impotent rage.

" W'at is she doing, Dimple ? " she asked uneasily.

" She got de cubbud do's fling wide open. She standin' on a cha'r lookin, in de corners an' behin' eve'ything."

" Dimple ! " called out Bosey from the far room. And away flew Dimple, who had not been so pleasingly agitated since the previous Christmas.

After a little while, of her own accord she stole noiselessly back into the room where Madame Félicie sat in speechless wrath beside the table of books. She closed the door behind her, rolled her eyes, and spoke in a hoarse whisper :

" She done fling 'way de barrel o' meal ; 'low it all fill up wid weevils."

" Weevil' ! " cried out her mistress.

" Yas'um, weevils ; 'low it plumb sp'ilt. 'Low it on'y fitten fo' de chickens an' hogs ; 'tain't fitten fo' folks. She done make Dan'el roll it out on de gal'ry."

"Weevil!" reiterated Madame Félicie, tremulous with suppressed excitement. "Bring me some of that meal in a saucer, Dimple. Don't let on anything."

She and Dimple bent over the cup of meal which the girl brought concealed under her skirt.

"Do you see any weevil', you Dimple?"

"No'um." Dimple smelled it, and Madame felt the sample of meal and rolled a pinch or two between her fingers. It was lumpy, musty, and old.

"She got Susan out dah helpin' her," insinuated Dimple, "an' Sam an Dan'el; all helpin' her."

"*Bon Dieu!* it won't be a grain of sugar left, a bar of soap —nothing! nothing! Go watch, Dimple. Don't stan' there like a stick."

"She 'low she gwine sen' Susan back to wuk in de fiel'," went on Dimple, heedless of her mistress' admonition. "She 'low Susan don' know how to cook. Susan say she willin' to go back, her. An' Miss Bosey, she ax Dan'el ef he know a fus'-class cook, w'at kin brile chicken an' steak an' make good soup, an' waffles, an' rolls, an' fricassée, and' dessert, and' custud, an sich."

She passed her tongue over a slobbering lip. "Dan'el say his wife Mandy done cook fo' de pa'tic'lest people in town, but she don' wuk cheap 'nough fo' Ma'me Félicie. An' Miss Bosey, she 'low it don' make no odd' 'bout de price, 'long she git hole o' somebody w'at know how to cook."

Madame's fingers worked nervously at the illuminated cover of a magazine. She said nothing. Only tightened her lips and blinked her small eyes.

When Bosey thrust her head in at the door to inquire how "Tantine" was getting on, the old lady fumbled at the books with a pretense of having been occupied with looking at them.

"That's right, Tante Félicie! You look as comfortable as can be. I wanted to make you a nice glass of lemonade, but Susan tells me there isn't a lemon on the place. I told Fannie's boy to bring up half a box of lemons from Lablatte's store in the handcart. There's nothing healthier than lemonade in summer. And he's going to bring a chunk of ice, too. We'll have to order ice from town after this." She had on a white apron over her gingham dress, and her sleeves were rolled to the elbows.

" I detes' lemonade; it is bad for *mon estomac,"* interposed Madame vehemently. " We'ave no use in the worl' for lemon', an' there is no place yere to keep ice. Tell Fannie's boy never min' about lemon' and ice."

" Oh, he's gone long ago! And as for the ice, why, Daniel says he can make me a box lined with sawdust—he made one for Doctor Godfrey. We can keep it under the back porch." And away she went, the embodiment of the thoroughgoing, bustling little housewife. Somewhat past noon, Dimple came in with an air of importance, removed the books, and spread a white damask cloth upon the table. It was like spreading a red cloth before a sullen bull. Madame's eyes glared at the cloth.

" W'ere did you get that? " she asked as if she would have annihilated Dimple on the spot.

" Miss Bosey, she tuck it out de big press; tuck some mo' out; 'low she kaint eat on dat meal-sack w'at we alls calls de table-clot'e." The damask cloth bore the initials of Madame's mother, embroidered in a corner.

" She done kilt two dem young pullets in de *basse-cour,"* went on Dimple, like a croaking raven. " Mandy come lopin' up f'om de quarters time Dan'el told 'er. She younder, rarin' roun' in de kitchen. Dey done sent fo' some sto' lard an' bakin' powders down to Lablatte's. Fannie's boy, he ben totin' all morin'. De cubbud done look lak a sto! "

" Dimple! " called Bosey in the distance.

When she returned it was with a pompous air, her head uplifted, and stepping carefully like a fat chicken. She bore a tray weighted with a repast such as she had never before in her life served to Madame Solisainte.

Mandy had outdone herself. She had broiled the breast of a pullet to a turn. She had fried the potatoes after a New Orleans receipt, and had made a pudding of richest ingredients of her own invention which had given her a name in the parish. There were two milky-looking poached eggs, and the biscuits were as light as snowflakes and the color of gold. The forks and spoons were of massive silver, also bearing the initials of Madame's mother. They had been reclaimed from the press with the table linen.

Under this new, strange influence Madame Solisainte seemed to have been deprived of the power of asserting her will. There was an occasional outburst like the flare of a smouldering fire, but she was outwardly timid and submissive. Only when she was alone with her young handmaid did she speak her mind.

Bosey took special care in arranging her aunt's toilet one morning not long after her arrival. She fastened a sheer white 'kerchief (which she found in the press) about the old lady's neck. She powdered her face from her own box of *duvet de cygne;* and she gave her a fine linen handkerchief (which she also found in the press), sprinkling it from the bottle of cologne water which she had brought from New Orleans. She filled the vase upon the table with fresh flowers, and dusted and rearranged the books there.

Madame had been moving forward the bookmark in the novel to pretend that she was reading it.

These unusual preparations were explained an hour or two later, when Bosey introduced into Madame Solisainte's presence their neighbor, Doctor Godfrey. He was a youngish, good-looking man, with a loud cherry voice and a superabundance of animal spirits. He seemed to carry about with him the very atmosphere of health and to dispense it broadcast in invisible waves.

"Do you see, Tante Félicie, how I think of everything? When I saw, last night, the suffering you endured at being put to bed, I decided that you ought to be under a physician's treatment. So the first thing I did this morning was to send a messenger for Doctor Godfrey, and here he is!"

Madame glared at him as he drew up a chair on the opposite side of the table and began to talk about how long it was since he had seen her.

"I do not need a physician!" she cried in tones of exasperation, looking from one to the other. "All the physician' in the worl' cannot 'elp me. My Mother was the same; she try all the physician' of the parish. She went to the 'ot spring', to *la Nouvelle Orleans,* an' she die' at las, in this chair. Nothing will 'elp me."

"That is for me to say, Madame Solisainte," said the Doctor, with cheerful assurance. "It is a good idea of your niece's that you should place yourself under a physician's care. I don't say mine, understand—there are many excellent physicians in the parish—but some one ought to look after you, if it is only to keep you in comfortable condition."

Madame blinked at him under lowered brows. She was thinking of his bill for this visit, and determined that he should not make a second one. She saw ruin staring her in the face, and felt as if she were being borne along on a raging torrent of extravagence to meet it.

Bosey had already explained Madame's symptoms to the Doctor, and he said he would send or bring over a preparation which Madame Solisainte must take night and morning until he saw fit to alter or discontinue it. Then he glanced at the magazines, while he and the girl engaged in a lively conversation across Madame's chair. His eyes sparkled with animation as he looked at Bosey, as fresh and sweet in her pink dimity gown as one of the flowers there on the table.

He came very often, and Madame grew sick with apprehension and uncertainty, unable to distinguish between his professional and social visits. At first she refused to take his medicine until Bosey stood over her one evening with a spoonful, gently but firmly expressing a determination to stand there till morning, if necessary, and Madame consented to swallow the mixture. The Doctor took Bosey out driving in his new buggy behind two fast trotters. The first time, after she had driven away, Madame Félicie charged Dimple to go into Miss Bosey's room and search everywhere for the bag of keys. But they were not to be found.

" She mus' kiard 'em wid 'er. She all time got 'em twis' roun' 'er arm. I believe she sleep wid 'em twis' roun' 'er arm," offered Dimple in explanation of her failure.

Unable to find the keys, she turned to examining the young girl's dainty belongings—such as were not under lock. She crept back into Madame Félicie's room, carrying a lace-frilled parasol which she silently held out for Madame's inspection. The lace was simple and inexpensive, but the old woman shuddered at sight of it as if it had been the rarest d'Alençon.

Perceiving the impression created by the gay sunshade, Dimple next brought in a pair of slippers with spangled toes, a fine pair of stockings that hung on the back of a chair, an embroidered petticoat, and finally a silk waist. She brought the articles one by one, with a certain solemnity rendered doubly impressive by her silence.

Dimple was wearing her best dress—a red calico with ruffles and puffed sleeves (Miss Bosey had compelled her to discard the other). As a consequence of this holiday attire Dimple gave herself Sunday airs, and passed her time hanging to the gallery post or doubling her body across the banister rail.

Bosey grew more and more prolific in her devices for her Aunt Félicie's comfort and entertainment. She invited Madame's old friends to visit her, singly and in groups; to spend the day—in some instances several days.

She began to have company herself. The young gentlemen and girls of the parish came from miles around to pay their respects. She was of a hospitable turn, and dispensed iced lemonade on such occasions, and sangaree—Lablatte having ordered a case of red wine from the city. There was constant baking of cakes going on in the kitchen, Daniel's wife surpassing all her former efforts in that direction.

Bosey gave lawn parties, with the Chinese lanterns all festooned among the oaks, with three musicians from the quarters playing the fiddle, the guitar and accordion on the gallery, right under Madame Solisainte's nose. She gave a ball and dressed Tante Félicie up for the occasion in a silk *peignoir* which she had had made in the city as a surprise.

The Doctor took Bosey driving or horseback riding every other day. He all but lived at Madame Solisainte's, and was in danger of losing all his practice, till Bosey, in mercy, promised to marry him.

She kept her engagement a secret from Tante Félicie, pursuing her avocation of the ministering angel up to the very day of her departure for the city to make preparations for her approaching marriage.

A beatitude, a beneficent joy settled upon Madame when Bosey announced her engagement to the Doctor and her intention to leave the plantation that afternoon.

" Oh! You can't imagine, Tante Félicie, how I regret to leave you—just as I was getting things so comfortably and pleasantly settled about you, too. If you want, perhaps Fifine or sister Adèle would come—"

" No! no! " cried Madame in shrill protest, " Nothing of the kin'! I insist, let them stay w'ere they are. I am ole; I am use' to my ways. It is not 'ard for me to be alone. I will not year of it! "

Madame could have sung for very joy as she listened all morning to the bustle of her niece's packing. She even petted doggie in her exuberance, for she had aimed many a blow at him with her stick when he had had the temerity to trust himself alone with her.

The trunks and the bathtub were sent away at noon. The clatter accompanying their departure sounded like sweet music in Madame Solisainte's ears. It was with almost a feeling of affection that she embraced her niece when the girl came and kissed her good-bye. The Doctor was going to drive his fiancée to the station in his buggy.

He told Madame Félicie that he felt like an archangel. In reality, he looked demented with happiness and excitement. She was as suave as honey to him. She was thinking that in the character of a nephew he would not have the indelicacy to present a bill for professional services.

The Doctor hurried out to turn the horses and to get ready the lap-robe to spread over the knees of his divinity. Bosey looked as dainty as the day she had made her appearance, in the same brown linen gown and jaunty traveling hat. There was a fathomless look in her blue eyes.

"And now, Tante Félicie," she said finally, "here is your bag of keys. You will find everything in perfect order, and I hope you will be satisfied. All the purchases have been entered in the book—you will find Lablatte's bills and everything correct. But, by the way, Tante Félicie, I want to tell you—I have made an equal division of grandmother's silver and table linen and jewels which I found in the strong box, and sent them to mamma. You know yourself it was only just; mamma had as much right to them as you. So, good-bye Tante Félicie. You are quite sure you wouldn't like to have sister Adèle?"

"*Voleuse! voleuse! voleuse!*" she heard her aunt's voice lifted after her in a shrill scream. It followed her as far as the leafy road beyond the live oaks.

Madame Solisainte trembled with excitement and agitation. She looked into the bag and counted the keys. They were all there.

"*Voleuse!*" she kept muttering. She was convinced that Bosey had robbed her of everything she possessed. The jewels were gone, she was sure of it—all gone. Her mother's watch and chain; bracelets, rings, earrings, everything gone. All the silver, the table, the bed linen, her mother's clothes—ah! that was why she had brought those three trunks!

Madame Solisainte clutched the brass key and glared at it with eyes wild with apprehension. She pounded her stick upon the floor till the rafters rang. But at that time of the afternoon—the hours between dinner and supper—the yard was deserted. And Dimple, still under the delusion created by the red ruffles and puffed sleeves, was strolling leisurely toward the station to see Miss Bosey off.

Madame pounded and called. In her wrath she overturned the table and sent the books and magazines flying in all directions. She sat a while a prey to the most violent agitation, the most turbulent misgivings, that made the pulses throb in her head and the blood course through her body as though the devil himself were at the valve.

"Robbed! Robbed! Robbed!" she repeated. "My gold; the rings; the necklace! I might have known! Oh! fool! *Ah! cher maître! pas possible!*"

Her head quivered as with a palsy upon its fat bulk. She clutched the arm of her chair and attempted to rise; her effort was fruitless. A second attempt, and she drew herself a few inches out of the chair and fell back again. A third effort, in which her whole big body shook and swayed like a vessel which has sprung a leak, and Madame Solisainte stood upon her feet.

She grasped the cane there at hand and stood helpless, screaming for Dimple. Then she began to walk—or rather drag her feet along the floor, slowly and with painful effort, shaking and leaning heavily upon her stick.

Madame did not think it strange or miraculous that she should be moving thus upon her tottering limbs, which for two years had refused to do their office. Her whole attention was bent upon reaching the press in her bedroom across the hall. She clutched the brass key; she had let all the other keys go, and she said nothing now but "*Volé, volé, volé!*"

Madame Solisainte managed to reach the room without other assistance than the chairs in her way afforded her, and the walls along which she propped her body as she sidled along. Her first thought upon unlocking the press was for her gold. Yes, there it was, all of it, in little piles as she had so often arranged it. But half the silver was gone; half the jewels and table linen.

When the servants began to congregate in the yard, they discovered Madame Félicie standing upon the gallery waiting for them. They uttered exclamations of wonder and consternation. Dimple became hysterical, and began to cry and scream out.

"Go an' fin' Richmond," said Madame to Daniel, and without comment or question he hurried off in search of the overseer.

"I will 'ave the law! Ah! *par exemple! pas possible!* to be rob' in that way! I will 'ave the law! Tell Lablatte I will not pay the bills. Mandy, go back to the quarters, an' sen' Susan to the kitchen. Dimple! Go an' carry all those book' and magazine' up in the attic, an' put on you' other dress. Do not let me fin' you array in those flounce' again! *Pas possible! volé comme ça!* I will 'ave the law!"

THE GODMOTHER[1]

I

TANTE ELODIE attracted youth in some incomprehensible way. It was seldom there was not a group of young people gathered about her fire in winter or sitting with her in summer, in the pleasant shade of the live oaks that screened the gallery.

There were several persons forming a half circle around her generous chimney early one evening in February. There were Madame Nicolas's two tiny little girls who sat on the floor and played with a cat the whole time; Madame Nicolas herself, who only came for the little girls and insisted on hurrying away because it was time to put the children to bed, and who, moreover, was expecting a caller. There was a fair, blonde girl, one of the younger teachers at the Normal School. Gabriel Lucaze offered to escort her home when she got up to go, after Madame Nicolas's departure. But she had already accepted the company of a silent, studious-looking youth who had come there in the hope of meeting her. So they all went away but young Gabriel Lucaze, Tante Elodie's godson, who stayed and played cribbage with her. They played at a small table on which were a shaded lamp, a few magazines and a dish of *pralines* which the lady took great pleasure in nibbling during the reflective pauses of the game. They had played one game and were nearing the end of the second. He laid a queen upon the table.

"Fifteen-two" she said, playing a five.

"Twenty, and a pair."

"Twenty-five. Six points for me."

"It's a 'go.'"

"Thirty-one and out. That is the second game I've won. Will you play another rubber, Gabriel?"

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[1] Written January 1899; published in *Reedy's Mirror*, December 12, 1901.

"Not much, Tante Elodie, when you are playing in such luck. Besides, I've got to get out, it's half past eight." He had played recklessly, often glancing at the bronze clock which reposed majestically beneath its crystal globe on the mantelpiece. He prepared at once to leave, going before the gilt-frame, oval mirror to fold and arrange a silk muffler beneath his great coat.

He was rather good looking. That is, he was healthy looking; his face a little florid, and hair almost black. It was short and curly and parted on one side. His eyes were fine when they were not bloodshot, as they sometimes were. His mouth might have been better. It was not disagreeable or unpleasant, but it was unsatisfactory and drooped a little at the corners. However, he was good to look at as he crossed the muffler over his chest. His face was unusually alert. Tante Elodie looked at him in the glass.

"Will you be warm enough, my boy? It has turned very cold since six o'clock."

"Plenty warm. Too warm."

"Where are you going?"

"Now, Tante Elodie," he said, turning, and laying a hand on her shoulder; he was holding his soft felt hat in the other. "It is always 'where are you going?' 'Where have you been?' I have spoiled you. I have told you too much. You expect me to tell you everything; consequently, I must sometimes tell you fibs. I am going to confession. There! are you satisfied?" and he bent down and gave her a hearty kiss.

"I am satisfied, provided you go to the priest to confession; not up the hill, mind you!"

"Up the hill" meant up at the Normal School with Tante Elodie. She was a very conservative person. "The Normal" seemed to her an unpardonable innovation, with its teachers from Minnesota, from Iowa, from God-knows-where, bringing strange ways and manners to the old town period. She was one, also, who considered the emancipation of slaves a great mistake. She had many reasons for thinking so and was often called upon to enumerate this in her wordy arguments with her many opponents.

II

Tante Elodie distinctly heard the Doctor leave the Widow Nicolas's at a quarter past ten. He visited the handsome and attractive young woman two evenings in the week and always left at the same hour. Tante Elodie's double glass doors opened upon the wide upper gallery. Around the angle of the gallery were the apartments of Madame Nicolas. Any one visiting the widow was obliged to pass Tante Elodie's door. Beneath was a store occasionally occupied by some merchant or other, but oftener vacant. A stairway led down from the porch to the yard where two enormous live oaks grew and cast a dense shade upon the gallery above, making it an agreeable retreat and resting place on the hot summer afternoons. The high, wooden yard-gate opened directly upon the street.

A half hour went by after the Doctor passed her door. Tante Elodie played solitaire. Another half hour followed and still Tante Elodie was not sleeping nor did she think of going to bed. It was very near midnight when she began to prepare her night toilet and to cover the fire.

The room was very large with heavy rafters across the ceiling. There was an enormous bed over in the corner; a four-posted mahogany covered with a lace spread which was religiously folded every night and laid on a chair. There were some ambrotypes and photographs about the room; a few comfortable but simple rocking chairs and a broad fireplace in which a big log sizzled. It was an attractive room for any one, not because of anything that was in it except Tante Eloide herself. She was far past fifty. Her hair was still soft and brown and her eyes bright and vivacious. Her figure was slender and nervous. There were many lines in her face, but it did not look care-worn. Had she her youthful flesh, she would have looked very young.

Tante Elodie had spent the evening in munching *pralines* and reading by lamp-light some old magazines that Gabriel Lucaze had brought from the club.

There was a romance connected with his early days. Romances serve but to feed the imagination of the young; they add nothing to the sum of truth. No one realized this fact more strongly than Tante Elodie herself. While she tacitly condoned the romance, perhaps for the sake of the sympathy it bred, she never thought of Justin Lucaze but with a feeling of gratitude towards the memory of her parents who had prevented her marrying him thirty-five years before. She could have no connection between her deep and powerful affection for young Gabriel Lucaze and her old-time, brief passion for his father. She loved the boy above everything on earth. There was none so attractive to her as he; none so thoughtful of her pleasures and pains. In his devotion there was no trace of a duty-sense; it was the spontaneous expression of affection and seeming dependence.

After Tante Elodie had turned down her bed and undressed, she drew a grey flannel *peignoir* over her nightgown and knelt down to say her prayers; kneeling before a rocker with her bare feet turned toward the fire. Prayers were no trifling matter with her. Besides those which she knew by heart, she read litanies and invocations from a book and also a chapter of *The Following of Christ.* She had said her *Notre Père,* her *Salve Marie,* and *Je crois en Dieu* and was deep in the litany of the Blessed Virgin when she fancied she heard footsteps on the stairs. The night was breathlessly still; it was very late.

"*Vierges des Vierges; Priez pour nous. Mère de Dieu; Priez—*"

Surely there was a stealthy step upon the gallery, and now a hand at her door, striving to lift the latch. Tante Elodie was not afraid. She felt the utmost security in her home and had no dread of mischievous intruders in the peaceful old town. She simply realized that there was someone at her door and that she must find out who it was and what he wanted. She got up from her knees, thrust her feet into her slippers that were near the fire and, lowering the lamp by which she had been reading her litanies, approached the door. There was the very softest rap upon the pane. Tante Elodie unbolted and opened the door the least bit.

"*Qui est la?*" she asked.

"Gabriel." He forced himself into the room before she had time to fully open the door to him.

III

Gabriel strode past her towards the fire, mechanically taking off his hat, and sat down in the rocker before which she had been kneeling. He sat on the prayer books she had left there. He removed them and laid them upon the table. Seeming to realize in a dazed way that it was not their accustomed place, he threw the two books on a nearby chair.

Tante Elodie raised the lamp and looked at him. His eyes were bloodshot, as they were when he drank or experienced any unusual emotion or excitement. But he was pale and his mouth drooped excessively, and twitched with the effort he made to control it. The top button was wrenched from his coat and his muffler was disarranged. Tante Elodie was grieved to the soul, seeing him thus. She thought he had been drinking.

"Gabriel, W'at is the matter?" she asked imploringly. "Oh, my poor child, w'at is the matter?" He looked at her in a fixed way and passed a hand over his head. He tried to speak, but his voice failed, as with one who experiences stage fright. Then he articulated, hoarsely, swallowing nervously between the slow words:

"I—killed a man—about an hour ago—yonder in the old Nigger-Luke Cabin." Tante Elodie's two hands went suddenly down to the table and she leaned heavily upon them for support.

"You did not; you did not," she panted. "You are drinking. You do not know w'at you are saying. Tell me, Gabriel, who 'as been making you drink? Ah! they will answer to me! You do not know w'at you are saying. *Boute!* how can you know!" She clutched him and the torn button that hung in the buttonhole fell to the floor.

"I don't know why it happened," he went on, gazing into the fire with unseeing eyes, or rather with eyes that saw what was pictured in his mind and not what was before them.

"I've been in cutting scrapes and shooting scrapes that never amounted to anything, when I was just as crazy mad as I was tonight. But I tell you, Tante Elodie, he's dead. I've got to get away. But how are you going to get out of a place like this, when every dog and cat"—His effort had spent itself, and he began to tremble with a nervous chill; his teeth chattered and his lips could not form an utterance.

Tante Elodie, stumbling rather than walking, went over to a small buffet and pouring some brandy into a glass, gave it to him. She took a little herself. She looked much older in the *peignoir* and the handkerchief tied around her head. She sat down beside Gabriel and took his hand. It was cold and clammy.

"Tell me everything," she said with determination, "everything; without delay; and do not speak so loud. We shall see what must be done. Was it a negro? Tell me everything."

"No, it was a white man, you don't know, from Conshotta, named Everson. He was half drunk; a hulking bully as strong as an ox, or I could have licked him. He tortured me until I was frantic. Did you ever see a cat torture a mouse? The mouse can't do anything but lose its head. I lost my head, but I had my knife; that big horn-handled knife."

"Where is it?" she asked sharply. He felt his back pocket.

"I don't know." He did not seem to care, or to realize the importance of the loss.

"Go on; make haste; tell me the whole story. You went from here—you went—go on."

"I went down the river a piece," he said, throwing himself back in the chair and keeping his eyes fixed upon one burning ember on the hearth, "down to Symund's store where there was a game of cards. A lot of the fellows were there. I played a little and didn't drink anything, and stopped at ten. I was going"—He leaned forward with his elbows on his knees and his hands hanging between. "I was going to see a woman at eleven o'clock; it was the only time I could see her. I came along and when I got by the old Nigger-Luke Cabin I lit a match and looked at my watch. It was too early and it wouldn't do to hang around. I went into the cabin and started a blaze in the chimney with some fine wood I found there. My feet were cold and I sat on an empty soap-box before the fire to dry them. I remember I kept looking at my watch. It was twenty-five minutes to eleven when Everson came into the cabin. He was half drunk and his face was red and looked like a beast. He had left the game and had followed me. I hadn't spoken of where I was going. But he said he knew I was off for a lark and he wanted to go along. I said he couldn't go where I was going, and there was no use talking. He kept it up. At a quarter to eleven I wanted to go, and he went and stood in the doorway.

"'If I don't go, you don't go,' he said, and he kept it up. When I tried to pass him he pushed me back like I was a feather. He didn't get mad. He laughed all the time and drank whiskey out of a bottle he had in his pocket. If I hadn't got mad and lost my head, I might had fooled him or played some trick on him—if I had used my wits. But I didn't know any more what I was doing than the day I threw the inkstand at old Dainean's head when he switched me and made fun of me before the whole school.

"I stooped by the fire and looked at my watch; he was talking all kinds of foolishness I can't repeat. It was eleven o'clock. I was in a killing rage and made a dash for the door. His big body and his big arm were there like an iron bar, and he laughed. I took out my knife and stuck it into him. I don't believe he knew at first that I had touched him, for he kept on laughing; then he fell over like a pig, and the old cabin shook."

Gabriel had raised his clinched hand with an intensely dramatic movement when he said, "I stuck it into him." Then he let his head fall back against the chair and finished the concluding sentences of his story with closed eyes.

" How do you know he is dead?" asked Tante Elodie, whose voice sounded hard and monotonous.

" I only walked ten steps away and went back to see. He was dead. Then I came here. The best thing is to go give myself up, I reckon, and tell the whole story like I've told you. That's about the best thing I can do if I want any peace of mind."

" Are you crazy, Gabriel! You have not yet regained your senses. Listen to me. Listen to me and try to understand what I say."

Her face was full of hard intelligence he had not seen there before; all the soft womanliness had for the moment faded out of it.

" You 'ave not killed the man Everson," she said deliberately. " You know nothing about 'im. You do not know that he left Symund's or that he followed you. You left at ten o'clock. You came straight in town, not feeling well. You saw a light in my window, came here; rapped on the door; I let you in and gave you something for cramps in the stomach and made you warm yourself and lie down on the sofa. Wait a moment. Stay still there."

She got up and went shuffling out the door, around the angle of the gallery and tapped on Madame Nicolas's door. She could hear the young woman jump out of bed bewildered, asking, " Who is there? Wait! What it is?"

" It is Tante Elodie." The door was unbolted at once.

" Oh! how I hate to trouble you, *chérie*. Poor Gabriel 'as been at my room for hours with the most severe cramps. Nothing I can do seems to relieve 'im. Will you let me 'ave the morphine which Doctor left with you for old Betsy's rheumatism? Ah! thank you. I think a quarter of a grain will relieve 'im. Poor boy! Such suffering! I am so sorry, dear, to disturb you. Do not stand by the door, you will take cold. Good night."

Tante Elodie persuaded Gabriel, if the club were still open, to look in there on his way home. He had a room in a relative's house. His mother was dead and his father lived on a plantation several miles from town. Gabriel feared that his nerve would fail him. But Tante Elodie had him up again with a glass of brandy. She said that he must get the fact lodged in his mind that he was innocent. She inspected the young man carefully before he went away, brushing and arranging his toilet. She sewed the missing button on his coat. She had noticed some blood on his right hand. He himself had not seen it. With a wet towel she washed his face and hands as though he were a little child. She brushed his hair and sent him away with a thousand reiterated precautions.

IV

Tante Elodie was not overcome in any way after Gabriel left her. She did not indulge in a hysterical moment, but set about accomplishing some purpose which she had evidently had in her mind. She dressed herself again; quickly, nervously, but with much precision. A shawl over her head and a long, black cape across her shoulders made her look like a nun. She quitted her room. It was very dark and very still out of doors. There was only a whispering wail among the live oak leaves.

Tante Elodie stole noiselessly down the steps and out the gate. If she had met anyone, she intended to say she was suffering with toothache and was going to the doctor or druggist for relief.

But she met not a soul. She knew every plank, every uneven brick of the sidewalk; every rut of the way, and might have walked with her eyes closed. Strangely enough she had forgotten to pray. Prayer seemed to belong to her moments of contemplation; while now she was all action; prompt, quick, decisive action.

It must have been near upon two o'clock. She did not meet a cat or a dog on her way to Nigger-Luke cabin. The hut was well out of town and isolated from a group of tumbled-down shanties some distance off, in which a lazy set of negroes lived. There was not the slightest feeling of fear or horror in her breast. There might have been, had she not already been dominated and possessed by the determination that Gabriel must be shielded from ignominy—maybe, worse.

She glided into the low cabin like a shadow, hugging the side of the open door. She would have stumbled over the dead man's feet if she had not stepped so cautiously. The embers were burning so low that they gave but a faint glow in the sinister cabin with its obscure corners, its black, hanging cobwebs and the dead man lying twisted as he had fallen with his face on his arm.

Once in the cabin the woman crept towards the body on her hands and knees. She was looking for something in the dusky light; something she could not find. Crawling towards the fire over the uneven, creaking boards, she stirred the embers the least bit with a burnt stick that had fallen to one side. She dared not make a blaze. Then she dragged herself once more towards the lifeless body. She pictured how the knife had been thrust in; how it had fallen from Gabriel's hand; how the man had come down like a felled ox. Yes, the knife could not be far off, but she could not discover a trace of it. She slipped her fingers beneath the body and felt all along. The knife lay up under his arm pit. Her hand scraped his chin as she withdrew it. She did not mind. She was exultant at getting the knife. She felt like some other being, possessed by Satan. Some fiend in human shape, some spirit of murder. A cricket began to sing on the hearth.

Tante Elodie noticed the golden gleam of the murdered man's watch chain, and a sudden thought invaded her. With deft, though unsteady fingers, she unhooked the watch and chain. There was money in his pockets. She emptied them, turning the pockets inside out. It was difficult to reach his left-hand pockets, but she did so. The money, a few bank notes and some silver coins, together with the watch and knife she tied in her handkerchief. Then she hurried away, taking a long stride across the man's body in order to reach the door.

The stars were like shining pieces of gold upon dark velvet. So Tante Elodie thought as she looked at them an instant.

There was a sound of disorderly voices away off in the negro shanties. Clasping the parcel close to her breast she began to run. She ran, ran, as fast as some fleet four-footed creature, ran, panting. She never stopped till she reached the gate that let her in under the live oaks. The most intent listener could not have heard her as she mounted the stairs; as she let herself in at the door; as she bolted it. Once in the room she began to totter. She was sick at her stomach and her head swam. Instinctively she reached out towards the bed, and fell fainting upon it, face downward.

The gray light of dawn was coming in at her windows. The lamp on the table had burned out. Tante Elodie groaned as she tried to move. And again she groaned with mental anguish, this time as the events of the past night came back to her, one by one, in all their horrifying details. Her labor of love, began the night before, was not yet ended. The parcel containing the watch and money were there beneath her, pressing into her bosom. When she managed to regain her feet, the first thing which she did was to rekindle the fire with splinters of pine and pieces of hickory that were at hand in her wood box. When the fire was burning briskly, Tante Elodie took the paper from the little bundle and burned it. She did not notice the denomination of the bills, there were five or six, she thrust them into the blaze with the poker and watched them burn. The few loose pieces of silver she put in her purse, apart from her own money; there was sixty-five cents in small coin. The watch she placed between her mattresses; then, seized with misgiving, took it out. She gazed around the room, seeking a safe hiding place and finally put the watch into a large, strong stocking which she pinned securely around her waist beneath her clothing. The knife she washed carefully, drying with pieces of newspaper which she burned. The water in which she had washed it she also threw in a corner of the large fireplace upon a heap of ashes. Then she put the knife into the pocket of one of Gabriel's coats which she had cleaned and mended for him; it was hanging in her closet.

She did all this slowly and with great effort, for she felt very sick. When the unpleasant work was over it was all she could do to undress and get beneath the covers of her bed.

She knew that when she did not appear at breakfast Madame Nicolas would send to investigate the cause of her absence. She took her meals with the young widow around the corner of the gallery. Tante Elodie was not rich. She received a small income from the remains of what had once been a magnificent plantation adjoining the lands which Justin Lucaze owned and cultivated. But she lived frugally, with a hundred small cares and economies and rarely felt the want of extra money except when the generosity of her nature prompted her to help an afflicted neighbor, or to bestow a gift upon some one of whom she was fond. It often seemed to Tante Elodie that all the effection of her heart was centered upon her young protégé, Gabriel; that what she felt for others was simply an emanation—rays, as it were, from the central sun of love that shone for him alone.

In the midst of twinges, of nervous tremors, her thoughts were with him. It was impossible for her to think of anything else. She was filled with unspeakable dread that he might betray himself. She wondered what he had done after he left her; what he was doing at that moment? She wanted to see him again alone, to insist anew upon the necessity of his self-assertion of innocence.

As she expected, Madame Nicolas came around at the breakfast hour to see what was the matter. She was an active woman, very pretty and fresh looking, with willing, deft hands and the kindest voice and eyes. She was distressed at the spectacle of poor Tante Elodie extended in bed with her head tied up, and looking pale and suffering.

" Ah! I suspected it! " she exclaimed, " coming out in the cold on the gallery last night to get morphine for Gabriel; *ma foi!* as if he could not go to the drug store for his morphine! Where have you pain? Have you any fever, Tante Elodie? "

" It is nothing, *chérie*. I believe I am only tired and want to rest for a day in bed."

" Then you must rest as long as you want. I will look after your fire and see that you have what you need. I will bring your coffee at once. It is a beautiful day; like spring. When the sun gets very warm I will open the window."

V

All day long Gabriel did not appear, and she dared not make inquiries about him. Several persons came in to see her, learning that she was sick. The midnight murder in the Nigger-Luke cabin seemed to be the favorite subject of conversation among her visitors. They were not greatly excited over it as they might have been were the man other than a comparative stranger. But the subject seemed full of interest, enhanced by the mystery surrounding it. Madame Nicolas did not risk to speak of it.

" That is not a fit conversation for a sick room. Any doctor—anybody with sense will tell you. For mercy's sake! change the subject."

But Fifine Delonce could not be silenced.

" And now it appears," she went on with renewed animation, " it appears he was playing cards down at Symund's store. That shows how they pass their time—those boys! It's a scandal! But nobody can remember when he left. Some say at nine, some say it was past eleven. He sort of went away like he didn't want them to notice."

" Well, we didn't know the man. My patience! there are murders every day. If we had to keep up with them, *ma foi!* Who is going to Lucie's card party tomorrow? I hear she did not invite her cousin Claire. They have fallen out again, it seems." And Madame Nicolas, after speaking, went to give Tante Elodie *Tisane.*

" Mr. Ben's got about twenty darkies from Niggerville, holding them on suspicion," continued Fifine, dancing on the edge of her chair. " Without doubt the man was enticed to the cabin and murdered and robbed there. Not a picayune left in his pockets! only his pistol that they didn't take, all loaded, in his back pocket, that he might have used, and his watch gone! Mr. Ben thinks his brother in Conshotta, that's very well off, is going to offer a big reward."

" What relation was the man to you, Fifine? " asked Madame Nicolas, sarcastically.

" He was a human being, Amelia; you have no heart, no feeling. If it makes a woman hard to associate with a doctor, then thank God—well—as I was saying, if they can catch these two strange section hands that left town last night—but you better bet they're not such fools to keep that watch. But old Uncle Marte said he saw little footprints like a woman's, early this morning, but no one wanted to listen to him or pay any attention, and the crowd tramped them out in little or no time. None of the boys want to let on; they don't want us to know which ones were playing cards at Symund's. Was Gabriel at Symund's Tante Elodie? "

Tante Elodie coughed painfully and looked blankly as though she had only heard her name and had been inattentive to what was said.

" For pity sake leave Tante Elodie out of this! it's bad enough she has to listen, suffering as she is. Gabriel spent the evening here, on Tante Elodie's sofa, very sick with cramps. You will have to pursue your detective work in some other quarter, my dear."

A little girl came in with a huge bunch of blossoms. There was some bustle attending the arrangement of the flowers in vases, and in the midst of it two or three ladies took their leave.

" I wonder if they are going to send the body off tonight, or if they're going to keep it for the morning train," Fifine was heard to speculate, before the door closed upon her.

Tante Elodie could not sleep that night. The following day she had some fever and Madame Nicolas insisted upon her seeing the doctor. He gave her a sleeping draught and some fever drops and said she would be all right in a few days; for he could find nothing alarming in her condition.

By a supreme effort of the will she got up on the third day hoping in the accustomed routine of her daily life to get rid, in part, of the uneasiness and unhappiness that possessed her.

The sun shone warm in the afternoon and she went and stood on the gallery watching for Gabriel to pass. He had not been near her. She was wounded, alarmed, miserable at his silence and absence; but determined to see him. He came down the street, presently, never looking up, with his hat drawn over his eyes.

"Gabriel!" she called. He gave a start and glanced around.

"Come up; I want to see you a moment."

"I haven't time now, Tante Elodie."

"Come in!" she said sharply.

"All right, you'll have to fix it up with Morrison," and he opened the gate and went in. She was back in her room by the time he reached it, and in her chair, trembling a little and feeling sick again.

"Gabriel, if you 'ave no heart, it seems to me you would 'ave some intelligence; a moment's recollection would show you the folly of altering your 'abits so suddenly. Did you not know I was sick? did you not guess my uneasiness?"

"I haven't guessed anything or known anything but a taste of hell," he said, not looking at her. Her heart bled afresh for him and went out to him in full forgiveness. "You were right," he went on, "it would have been horrible to say anything. There is no suspicion. I'll never say anything unless some one should be falsely accused."

"There will be no possible evidence to accuse anyone," she assured him. "Forget, it forget it. Keep on as though it was something you had dreamed. Not only for the outside, but within yourself. Do not accuse yourself of that act, but the actions, the conduct, the ungovernable temper that made it possible. Promise me it will be a lesson to you, Gabriel; and God, who reads men's hearts, will not call it a crime, but an accident which your unbridled nature invited. I will forget it. You must forget it. 'Ave you been in the office?"

"Today; not yesterday. I don't know what I did yesterday, but look for the knife—after they—I couldn't go while he was there—and I thought every minute someone was coming to accuse me. And when I realized they weren't—I don't know

—I drank too much, I think. Reading law! I might as well have been reading Hebrew. If Morrison thinks—See here, Tante Elodie, are there any spots on this coat? Can you see anything here in the light?"

"There are no spots anywhere. Stop thinking of it, I implore you." But he pulled off the coat and flung it across a chair. He went to the closet to get his other coat which he knew he hung there. Tante Elodie, still feeble and suffering, in the depths of her chair, was not quick enough, could think of no way to prevent it. She had at first put the knife in his pocket with the intention of returning it to him. But now she dreaded to have him find it and thus discover the part she had played in the sickening dream.

He buttoned up his coat and started away.

"Please burn it," he said, looking at the garment on the chair, "I never want to see it again."

VI

When it became distinctly evident that no slightest suspicion would be attached to him for the killing of Everson; when he plainly realized that there was no one upon whom the guilt could be fastened, Gabriel thought he would regain his lost equilibrium. If in no other way, he fancied he could reason himself back into it. He was suffering, but he someway had no fear that his present condition of mind would last. He thought it would pass away like a malignant fever. It would have to pass away or it would have to kill him.

From Tante Elodie's he went over to Morrison's office where he was reading law. Morrison and his partner were out of town and he had the office to himself. He had been there all morning. There was nothing for him to do now but to see anyone who called on business, and to go on with his reading. He seated himself and spread the book before him, but he looked into the street through the open door. Then he got up and shut the door. He again fastened his eyes upon the pages before him, but his mind was traveling other ways. For the hundreth time he was going over every detail of the fatal night, and trying to justify himself in his own heart.

If it had been an open and fair fight there would have been no trouble in squaring himself with his conscience; if the man had shown the slightest disposition to do him bodily harm, but he had not. On the other hand, he asked himself, what constituted a murder? Why, there was Morrison himself who had once fired at Judge Filips on the very street. His ball had gone wide the mark, and consequently he and Filips had adjusted their difficulties and became friends. Was Morrison any less a murderer because his weapon had missed?

Suppose the knife had swerved, had penetrated the arm, had inflicted a harmless scratch or flesh wound, would he be sitting there now, calling himself names? But he would try to think it all out later. He could not bear to be there alone, he never liked to be alone, and now he could not endure it. He closed the book without the slightest recollection of a line his eyes had followed. He went and gazed up and down the street, then he locked the office and walked away.

The fact of Everson having been robbed was very puzzling to Gabriel. He thought about it as he walked along the street.

The complete change that had taken place in his emotions, his sentiments, did not astonish him in the least; we accept such phenomena without question. A week ago—not so long as that—he was in love with a fair-haired girl up at the Normal. He was undeniably in love with her. He knew the symptoms. He wanted to marry her and meant to ask her whenever his position justified him in doing so.

Now, where had that love gone? He thought of her with indifference. Still, he was seeking her at that moment, through habit, without any special motive. He had no positive desire to see her; to see any one; and yet he could not endure to be alone. He had no desire to see Tante Elodie. She wanted him to forget and her presence made him remember.

The girl was walking under the beautiful trees, and she stood and waited for him, when she saw him mounting the hill. As he looked at her, his fondness for her and his intentions toward here, appeared now, like child's play. Life was something terrible of which she had no conception. She seemed to him as harmless, as innocent, as insignificant as a little child.

" Oh! Gabriel," she exclaimed. " I had just written you a note. Why haven't you been here? It was foolish to get offended. I wanted to explain: I couldn't get out of it the other night, at Tante Elodie's, when he asked me. You know I couldn't, and that I would rather have come with you." Was it possible he would have taken this seriously a week ago?

" Delonce is a good fellow; he's a decent fellow. I don't blame you. That's all right." She was hurt at his easy compliance. She did not wish to offend him, and here she was grieved because he was not offended.

" Will you come indoors to the fire?" she asked.

" No; I just strolled up for a minute." He leaned against a tree and looked bored, or rather, preoccupied with other things than herself. It was not a week ago that he wanted to see her every day; when the hours were like minutes that he passed beside her. " I just strolled up to tell you that I am going away."

" Oh! going away?" and the pink deepened in her cheeks, and she tried to look indifferent and to clasp her glove tighter. He had not the slightest intention of going away when he mounted the hill. I came to him like an inspiration.

" Where are you going?"

" Going to look for work in the city."

" And what about your law studies?"

" I have no talent for law; it's about time I acknowledged it. I want to get into something that will make me hustle. I wouldn't mind—I'd like to get something to do on a railroad that would go tearing through the country night and day. What's the matter?" he asked, perceiving her tears that she could not control.

" Nothing's the matter," she answered with dignity, and a sense of seeming proud.

He took her word for it and, instead of seeking to console her, went rambling on about the various occupations in which he should like to engage for a while.

"When are you going?"

"Just as soon as I can."

"Shall I see you again?"

"Of course. Good-bye. Don't stay out here too long, you might take cold." He listlessly shook hands with her and descended the hill with long, rapid strides.

He would not intentionally have hurt her. He did not realize that he was wounding her. It would have been as difficult for him to revive his passion for her as to bring Everson back to life. Gabriel knew there could be fresh horror added to the situation. Discovery would have added to it; a false accusation would have deepened it. But he never dreamed of the new horror coming as it did, through Tante Elodie, when he found the knife in his pocket. It took a long time to realize what it meant; and then he felt as if he never wanted to see her again. In his mind, her action identified itself with his crime, and made itself a hateful, hideous part of it, which he could not endure to think of, and of which he could not help thinking.

It was the one thing which had saved him, and yet he felt no gratitude. The great love which had prompted the deed did not soften him. He could not believe that any man was worth loving to such length, or worth saving at such a price. She seemed, to his imagination, less a woman than a monster, capable of committing, in cold blood, deeds which he himself could only accomplish in blind rage. For the first time Gabriel wept. He threw himself down upon the ground in the deepening twilight and wept as he never had before in his life. A terrible sense of loss overpowered him; as if someone dearer than a mother had been taken out of the reach of his heart; as if a refuge had gone from him. The last spark of human affection was dead within him. He wept at the loss which left him alone with his thoughts.

VII

Tante Elodie was always chilly. It was warm for the last of April, and the women at Madame Nicolas's wedding were all in airy summer attire. All but Tante Elodie, who wore her black silk, her old silk with a white lace fichu, and she held an embroidered handkerchief and a fan in her hand.

Fifine Delonce had been over in the morning to take up the seams in the dress, for, as she expressed herself, it was miles too loose for Tante Elodie's figure. She appeared to be shriveling away to nothing. She had not again been sick in bed since that little spell in February; but she was plainly wasting and was very feeble. Her eyes, though, were as bright as ever; sometimes they looked as hard as flint. The doctor, whom Madame Nicolas insisted upon her seeing occasionally, gave a name to her disease; it was a Greek name and sounded convincing. She was taking a tonic especially prepared for her, from a large bottle, three times a day.

Fifine was a great gossip. When and how she gathered her news nobody could tell. It was always said she knew ten times more than the weekly paper would dare to print. She often visited Tante Elodie, and she told her news of everyone; among others of Gabriel.

It was she who told that he had abandoned the study of the law. She told Tante Elodie when he started to the city to look for work and when he came back from the fruitless search.

" Did you know that Gabriel is working on the railroad, now? Fireman! Think of it! What a comedown from reading law in Morrison's office. If I were a man, I'd try to have more strength of character than to go to the dogs on account of a girl; an insignificant somebody from Kansas! Even if she is going to marry my brother, I must say it was no way to treat a boy—leading him on, especially a boy like Gabriel, that any girl would have been glad to—Well, its none of my business; only I'm sorry he took it like he did. Drinking himself to death, they say."

That morning, as she was taking up the seams of the silk dress, there was fresh news of Gabriel. He was tired of the railroad, it seemed. He was down on his father's place herding cattle, breaking in colts, drinking like a fish.

"I wouldn't have such a thing on my conscience! Goodness me! I couldn't sleep at nights if I was that girl."

Tante Elodie always listened with a sad, resigned smile. It did not seem to make any difference whether she had Gabriel or not. He had broken her heart and he was killing her. It was not his crime that had broken her heart; it was his indifference to her love and his turning away from her.

It was whispered about that Tante Elodie had grown indifferent to her religion. There was no truth in it. She had not been to confession for two months; but otherwise she had followed closely the demands made upon her; redoubling her zeal in church work and attending mass each morning.

At the wedding she was holding quite a little reception of her own in the corner of the gallery. The air was mild and pleasant. Young people flocked about her and occasionally the radiant bride came out to see if she were comfortable and if there was anything she wanted to eat or drink.

A young girl leaning over the railing suddenly exclaimed "*Tiens!* Someone is dead. I didn't know anyone was sick." She was watching the approach of a man who was coming down the street, distributing, according to the custom of the country, a death notice from door to door.

He wore a long black coat and walked with a measured tread. He was as expressionless as an automaton; handing the little slips of paper at every door; not missing one. The girl, leaning over the railing, went to the head of the stairs to receive the notice when he entered Tante Elodie's gate. The small, single sheet, which he gave her, was bordered in black and decorated with an old-fashioned woodcut of a weeping willow beside a grave. It was an announcement on the part of Monsieur Justin Lucaze of the death of his only son, Gabriel, who had been instantly killed, the night before, by a fall from his horse.

If the automaton had any sense of decency he might have skipped the house of joy, in which there was a wedding feast, in which there was the sound of laughter, the click of glasses, the hum of merry voices, and a vision, of sweet women with their thoughts upon love and marriage and earthly bliss. But he had no sense of decency. He was as indifferent and relentless as Death, whose messenger he was.

The sad news, passed from lip to lip, cast a shadow as if a cloud had flitted across the sky. Tante Elodie alone stayed in the shadow. She sank deeper down into the rocker, more shriveled than ever. They all remembered Tante Elodie's romance and respected her grief.

She did not speak any more, or even smile, but wiped her forehead with the old lace handkerchief and sometimes closed her eyes. When she closed her eyes she pictured Gabriel dead, down there on the plantation, with his father watching beside him. He might have betrayed himself had he lived. There was nothing now to betray him. Even the shining gold watch lay deep in a gorged ravine where she had flung it when she once walked through the country alone at dusk.

She thought of her own place down there beside Justin's, all dismantled, with bats beating about the eaves and negroes living under the falling roof.

Tante Elodie did not seem to want to go indoors again. The bride and groom went away. The guests went away, one by one, and all the little children. She stayed there alone in the corner, under the deep shadow of the oaks while the stars came out to keep her company.

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[1] Professor Pattee was the first critic of note to write enthusiastically of Kate Chopin after her work, seemingly, had disappeared from view.

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1889

If it Might Be (poem)	*America,* Chicago, July 10, I, No. 41, p. 9.
A Point at Issue	*Post Dispatch,* St. Louis, October 27, XLI, No. 5, p. 22.
Wiser Than a God	*Musical Journal,* Philadelphia, December, IV, No. 12, pp. 38–40.

1890

At Fault (novel)	Nixon-Jones Printing Co., St. Louis.
With the Violin	*Spectator,* St. Louis, December 6.
A Red Velvet Coat	*ms*

1891

Miss Witherwell's Mistake	*Fashion and Fancy,* St. Louis, February, V, No. 4, pp. 115–117.
For Marse Chouchoute	*Youth's Companion,* August 20, LXIV, 450–451.
A Harbinger	*St. Louis Magazine,* November.
A Very Fine Fiddle	*Harper's Young People's Magazine,* November 24, XIII, 79.
Boulôt and Boulotte [1]	*Harper's Young People's Magazine,* December 8, XIII, 112.

1892

Old Aunt Peggy	Written January 8; published in *Bayou Folk.*

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[1] *The Creole Monthly,* New Orleans, June 1896, I, No. 4, reprints this story as "Mouene and Mounette," by Lola Alvez. No credit is given Kate Chopin.

A Little Free Mulatto Croque-Mitaine	*ms* February.
The Bênitous' Slave A Turkey Hunt	*Harper's Young People's Magazine,* February 16, XIII, 280 and 287.
A Wizard from Gettysburg	*Youth's Companion,* July 7, LXV, 346–347.
Love on the Bon-Dieu	*Two Tales,* Boston, July 23, II, 148–156.
Monsieur Pierre (translation from Adrien Vely)	*Post Dispatch,* August 8, XLIII, No. 355, p. 2.
At the 'Cadian Ball	*Two Tales,* October 22, III, 145–152.
The Maid of St. Phillippe	*Short Stories,* Boston, November, XI, No. 3, pp. 257–264
The Return of Alcibiade	*St. Louis Life,* December 17, VII, No. 132, pp. 6–9.
Loka	*Youth's Companion,* December 22, LXV, 670–671.
The Christ Light	Syndicated—*American Press Association,* December.

1893

Désirée's Baby A Visit to Avoyelles	*Vogue,* January 14, I, 70–74 and 74–75.
A Rude Awakening	*Youth's Companion,* February 2, LXVI, 54–55.
The Lilies	*Wide Awake,* April, XXXVI, 415–418.
In and Out of Old Natchitoches	*Two Tales,* Boston, April 8, V, 103–114.
A Shameful Affair	*The Times Democrat,* New Orleans, April 9, XXX, no No., p. 16.
Mrs. Mobry's Reason	*The Times Democrat,* New Orleans, April 23, XXX, no No., p. 16.
Caline	*Vogue,* May 20, I, 324–325.

Madame Célestin's Divorce	Written May 24–25; published in *Bayou Folk.*
Beyond the Bayou	*Youth's Companion,* June 15, LXVI, 302–303.
Ripe Figs	*Vogue,* August 19, II, 90.
A Lady of Bayou St. John	*Vogue,* September 21, II, 154 and 158.
Dr. Chevalier's Lie	*Vogue,* October 5, II, 174, 178.
A Gentleman of Bayou Têche	Written November 5–7; published in *Bayou Folk.*
In Sabine	Written November 20–22; published in *Bayou Folk.*
Ma'ame Pélagie	*The Times Democrat,* New Orleans, December 24, XXXI, no No., p. 23.

1894

A No-Account Creole	*Century,* January, XLVII, 382–393.
La Belle Zoraïde	*Vogue,* January 4, III, 2 and 10.
A Respectable Woman	*Vogue,* February 15, III, 68 and 72.
Bayou Folk (collected stories)	Houghton Mifflin Co., February.
Mamouche	*Youth's Companion,* April 19, LXVII, 178–179.
The Western Association of Writers (criticism)	*The Critic,* New York, July 7, XXV, 15.
Good Night (poem)	*The Times Democrat,* July 22, XXXII, no No., p. 17.
Tante Cat'rinette	*Atlantic Monthly,* September, LXXIV, 368–373.
Crumbling Idols (criticism)	*St. Louis Life,* October 6, X, No. 250, p. 13.
The Real Edwin Booth (criticism)	*St. Louis Life,* October 13, X, No. 251, p. 11.
Emil Zola's *Lourdes* (criticism)	*St. Louis Life,* November 17, X, No. 256, p. 5.
Azélie	*Century,* December, XLIX, 282–287.
The Dream of an Hour	*Vogue,* December 6, IV, 360.

Tonie (Later called " At Chênière Caminada ")	*The Times Democrat,* December 23, XXXII, no No., p. 21.

1895

In and Out of Old Natchitoches In Sabine	Syndicated—*American Press Association,* January.
The Dream of an Hour (reprinted from *Vogue*)	*St. Louis Life,* January 5.
The Kiss	*Vogue,* January 17, IV, 37.
It (translated from Maupassant)	*St. Louis Life,* February 23, XI, No. 270, pp. 12–13.
A Dresden Lady in Dixie	*Catholic Home Journal,* March 3.
Cavanelle	*American Jewess,* Chicago, April, I, No. 1, pp. 22–25.
Two Portraits	*ms* August.
Her Letters	*Vogue,* Part I, April 11, V, 228–230; Part II, April 18, V, 248.
Regret	*Century,* May, L, 147–149.
Odalie Misses Mass	*The Shreveport Times,* Shreveport, La., July 1.
Night Juanita	*Moods,* Philadelphia, July, II, no No., no p.
Two Summers and Two Souls	*St. Louis Life,* August 24, XII, No. 296, p. 5.
Two Summers and Two Souls (reprinted from *St. Louis Life*)	*Vogue,* September 19, VI, 84.
A Matter of Prejudice	*Youth's Companion,* September 25, LXVIII, 450.
The Unexpected	*St. Louis Life,* November 2, XII, No. 306, p. 5.
An Embarrassing Situation, A One-act Comedy	*Reedy's Mirror,* St. Louis, December 19, V, No. 45, pp. 9–11.
A Sentimental Soul	*The Times Democrat,* New Orleans, December 22, XXXIII, No. 14074, pp. 14–15.

Solitude (translated from Maupassant)	*St. Louis Life,* December 28, XIII, No. 314, p. 30.
Vagabonds	*ms* December.

1896

A Night in Acadie	Written March; published in *A Night in Acadie.*
After the Winter	*The Times Democrat,* New Orleans, April 5, XXXIII, No. 14179, pp. 22–23.
Polydore	*Youth's Companion,* April 23, LXX, 214–215.
The Recovery	*Vogue,* May 21, VIII, 354–355.
Ozème's Holiday	*Century,* August, LII, 629–631.
Athénaïse	*Atlantic Monthly,* Part I, August; Part II, September, LXXVIII, 232–241 and 404–413.
Ti Frère	*ms* September.
Lilacs	*The Times Democrat,* New Orleans, December 20, XXXIV, No. 14438, p. 13.
A Mental Suggestion	*ms* December.

1897

A Night in Acadie (collected stories)	Way & Williams, Chicago.
Dead Men's Shoes	*The Independent,* New York, February 11, XLIX, 194–195.
As You Like It:	
"I Have a Young Friend"	*Criterion,* St. Louis, February 13, XIII, No. 373, p. 11.
"It Has Lately Been"	*Criterion,* St. Louis, February 20, XIII, No. 374, p. 17.
The Falling in Love of Fedora, Signed *La Tour*	*Criterion,* St. Louis, February 20, XIII, No. 374, p. 9.
As You Like It:	
"Several Years Ago"	*Criterion,* St. Louis, February 27, XIII, No. 375, p. 11.

Miss McEnders, Signed *La Tour*	*Criterion,* St. Louis, March 6, XIII, No. 376, pp. 16–18.
As You Like It:	
"A While Ago"	*Criterion,* St. Louis, March 13, XIII, No. 377, pp. 15–16.
"A Good Many"	*Criterion,* St. Louis, March 20, XIII, No. 378, p. 14.
"We Are Told"	*Criterion,* St. Louis, March 27, XIII, No. 379, p. 10.
The Locket	*ms*
An Easter Day Conversion	*Criterion,* St. Louis, April 17, XV,[2] No. 382, pp. 13–14.
The Blind Man	*Vogue,* May 13, IX, 303.
Nég Créol	*Atlantic Monthly,* July, LXXX, 135–138.
Aunt Lympy's Interference	*Youth's Companion,* August 12, LXXI, 373–374.
A Pair of Silk Stockings	*Vogue,* September 16, X, 191–192.
Suzette	*Vogue,* October 21, X, 262 and 266.

1898

Elizabeth Stock's One Story	*ms* March.
Ti Démon	*ms* March.
Night (translation)	*ms* April.
Suicide (translated from Maupassant)	*The St. Louis Republic,* June 5, XC, Part 4, p. 7.
The Storm	*ms* December.

1899

The Awakening (novel)	Herbert S. Stone & Co., Chicago (republished July, 1906, by Duffield & Co., New York).
In the Confidence of a Story Writer	*Atlantic Monthly,* January, Contributor's Club, LXXXIII, 137–139.

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[2] Vol. XV seems incorrect. Evidently vol. XIV was omitted. The title page has vol. XV.

One Day in Winter	*ms* January.
A Little Country Girl	*ms* February.
I Opened All the Portals Wide (poem)	*Century,* July, LVIII, 361.
A Family Affair	*Saturday Evening Post,* September 9, CLXXII, 168–169.
"On certain brisk, bright days" (a personal account)	St. Louis *Post-Dispatch,* November 26, Part 4, p. 1.
A Reflection	*ms* November.
Poems	*ms* December.

1900

Alexander's Wonderful Experience	*ms* January.
The Gentleman from New Orleans	*ms* February.
An Egyptian Cigarette	*Vogue,* April 19, XV, 252 and 254.
Charlie	*ms* April.
The White Eagle	*Vogue,* July 12, XVI, 20 and 21.

1901

The Godmother	*Reedy's Mirror,* St. Louis, December 12, XI, No. 44, pp. 9–13.

1902

A Vocation and a Voice	*Reedy's Mirror,* St. Louis, March 27, XII, No. 7, pp. 18–24.
The Wood-Choppers	*Youth's Companion,* May 29, LXXVI, 270–271.
Polly	*Youth's Companion,* July 3, LXXVI, 334–335.

Mss Without Date

The Impossible Miss Meadows
Jacques
Father Amable (translation)

Novels and Short-Story Collections

1890	*At Fault* (novel)	Nixon-Jones Co., St. Louis.
1894	*Bayou Folk*	Houghton, Mifflin Co., Boston.
	1. A No-Account Creole	*Century,* January, 1894.
	2. In and Out of Old Natchitoches	*Two Tales,* April 8, 1893.
	3. In Sabine	First appearance in print.
	4. A Very Fine Fiddle	*Harper's Young People's,* November 24, 1891.
	5. Beyond the Bayou	*Youth's Companion,* June 15, 1893.
	6. Old Aunt Peggy	First appearance in print.
	7. The Return of Alcibiade	*St. Louis Life,* December 17, 1892.
	8. A Rude Awakening	*Youth's Companion,* February 2, 1893.
	9. The Bênitous' Slave	*Harper's Young People's,* February 16, 1892.
	10. Désirée's Baby	*Vogue,* January 14, 1893.
	11. A Turkey Hunt	*Harper's Young People's,* February 16, 1892.
	12. Madame Célestin's Divorce	First appearance in print.
	13. Love on the Bon-Dieu	*Two Tales,* July 23, 1892.
	14. Loka	*Youth's Companion,* December 22, 1892.
	15. Boulôt and Boulotte	*Harper's Young People's,* December 8, 1891.
	16. For Marse Chouchoute	*Youth's Companion,* August 20, 1891.
	17. A Visit to Avoyelles	*Vogue,* January 14, 1893.
	18. A Wizard from Gettysburg	*Youth's Companion,* July 7, 1892.
	19. Ma'ame Pélagie	*The Times Democrat,* December 24, 1893.
	20. At the 'Cadian Ball	*Two Tales,* October 22, 1892.
	21. La Belle Zoraïde	*Vogue,* January 4, 1894.
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	3. After the Winter	*The Times Democrat,* April 5, 1896.
	4. Polydore	*Youth's Companion,* April 23, 1896.
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